A REBUKE TO BACKSLIDERS, AND A Spurr for Loyterers.

In ſeveral Sermons, lately preached to a Private Congregation, and now publiſhed for

The Awakening a Sleepy Age.

By *R.A.* Author of *Vindiciæ Pietatis.*

Rom.13.11. *It is high time to awaken out of ſleep.*
Heb.10.38. *If any man draw back, my ſoul ſhall have no pleaſure in him.*

LONDON:
Printed for *John Hancock* at the three Bibles in Popes Head Alley over againſt the Royal Exchange in Cornhill. 1677.

To the Reader.

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Reader,

THE Caſe of the Churches of Chriſt among us is ſo deplorable, our ſpiritual diſtempers ſo many and ſo dangerous, and our decays and languiſhings under them ſo viſible, that he hath a blind eye that ſees it not, and an hard heart who bleeds not under it. Surely in ſuch a time, the Servants of the Lord ſhould not keep ſilence; but Oh how inſufficient am I, to ſpeak as I ought to ſpeak, in ſo great a caſe? Some thoughts I had in mine heart to make an attempt, but being diſcouraged by the ſenſe of my many infirmities, which have of late exceedingly grown upon me, I laid aſide all ſuch thoughts, and onely prepared the enſuing Meditations for a Private Congregation, reſolving againſt all further publication of them then from the Pulpit. But when I had gone through what I intended, I was ſet upon by many of my hearers, from whoſe importunities (ſeconded by a worthy Miniſter) I could have no reſt, for divers moneths together, till I had yielded to publiſh what now comes to thy hands.

Perhaps thou wilt blame me for making this adventure, and ſo ſhould I my ſelf, were I not perſwaded that there was a ſpecial hand of God in it, leading me on beyond and againſt my firſt intentions.

Thou wilt find this Diſcourſe indigeſted, but yet 'tis ſerious; and though it hath not in it to pleaſe thy Fancy, yet mayſt thou find that which may prick thee to the heart, which will be far better. Let not the compoſure of it offend thee, I am in ſo great earneſt, the matter in hand ſo important, our peoples neceſſity ſo urgent, that thou muſt abate me conciſeneſs or curioſity. If thou ſhouldeſt be nauſeated at my frequent inculcations of the ſame duties, my frequent inſtancing the ſame ſins and corruptions, my frequent putting the ſame or the like Interrogatories

in divers parts of it, and ſhouldeſt cenſure me for uſing more words then needs, let me tell thee;

1. *That I know what narrow mouth'd bottles many of thoſe were I had to deal withall, which would receive but drop by drop, now a little and then a little, and ſo had need the oftener pouring in, though of the ſame liquor. I know what hard and knotty pieces ſome of them were, into whom I was faſtening my nails, and muſt therefore the oftener uſe the hammer to drive them home; many knocks at the ſame nail may do, when one or two will not. I know what forgetful hearers too many of them were, and therefore thought it requiſite to ſet the ſame Glaſs again and again before them, leſt they ſhould ſoon forget what form they were of. I was deſirous that my hearers ſhould carry upon their hearts an expreſs ſenſe of my deſigns, all along from firſt to laſt, and therefore have put them the oftner in remembrance of it.*

2. *I am perſwaded that ſome of my Readers may have the ſame need that my hearers had, and am therefore willing to let it go as it is.*

Some imperfections there are, which (I freely confeſs) I would have helped if I could, but I cannot do as I would, nor perhaps now as once I could. Whatever this little work be, I do in all humility of ſoul offer it up to the Lord, in hope that he will graciouſly accept it, and make uſe of it for ſome ſervice to his Name and People, warning thee in his Name (eſpecially if thou be one who art more particularly concerned in it, either as a Backſlider or as a Loyterer) ſo to read, as firſt to take knowledge of thy ſelf, and the caſe thou art in, and then to take heed to thy ſelf, that thou make not light of thy diſeaſe nor thy remedy, but carefully apply and improve the counſels and reproofs which are brought unto thee, even to thee, from the Lord, by the hand of his unworthy Servant, and

Thy Servant for Jeſus ſake,

R. A.

The Contents.

THE opening of the Text.

Doct. 1. The Churches complaints are especially of the Churches sins.

Doct. 2. It is the property of the people of God, in the confession of their sins, to give them their due aggravations.

Doct. 3. Consumption in Religion, where it is epidemical, is a Forerunner of Confusion. Where,

1. What Consumption in Religion is. There is,

1. A partial or gradual decay: Professors of Religion may grow to a decay,

1. Inwardly, in their Faith, in their sense of Eternity, in all their graces, and inward vital operations.

2. Outwardly, in their outward duties and conversations.

2. A total decay, or Apostacy from Christ and Christianity.

2. That a general consumption in Religion is a Forerunner of Confusion.

The chief Doctrines insisted on are,

Doct. 4. It's the duty of the people of God to stir up themselves in the matters of Religion.

Doct. 5. Stirring Religion will take hold of God. Both these handled together in these 5 following generals.

I. What it is to stir up our selves in the matters of Religion.

1. There is a stirring up [to] Religion, which is the duty of those that are yet short of true Religion; and this stirring stands,

1. In mens Bethinking themselves of their miserable state.

2. In their crying out for help out of this wretched state.

3. In their taking the Alarm from the Watchmen.

4. In their forcing themselves back from their sins, and onward's towards Christ.

2. There

2. *There is a ſtirring up our ſelves* [*in*] *Religion, which is the duty of thoſe that have ſomething of Religion in them. Where,*

1. *By what acts we ſhould ſtir up our ſelves.*

2. *To what pitch of Religion we ſhould ſtir up our ſelves.*

Anſwered.

1. *In general.*

2. *In particular.*

1. *To an hunger and thirſt after more of Religion.*

2. *To a ſavour and reliſh of Religion.*

3. *To ſolidity in Religion. To a confirmed, eſtabliſhed ſtate of ſoul; ſtanding,*

1. *In a firm reſolution for Chriſt.*

2. *In a firm truſt in Chriſt.*

3. *In a firm adherence to Chriſt.*

4. *In a confirmed habit of Religion.*

4. *To fruitfulneſs in Religion.*

5. *To ſteddineſs and evenneſs in Religion.*

II. *What need there is of ſtirring up our ſelves to, and in Religion. This made appear from* 2 *Particulars:*

1. *Thoſe that fall ſhort of Religion, and thoſe that carefully maintain not the Religion they have, are like to be loſt at laſt.*

2. *Without ſtirring up themſelves, men are never like to attain to Religion, or to maintain that Religion they have.*

The neceſſity of ſtirring up our ſelves upon both theſe accounts, evidenced:

1. *From the diſtance we are at from what we ſhould be.*

2. *From the difficulty of recovering thoſe that are fallen, evidenced:*

1. *From the difficulty of diſcerning their decays in the beginning.*

2. *From their indiſpoſition and unwillingneſs to ſeek out after a cure.*

3. *From*

3. *From the oppoſition that is made againſt their recovery: By*

1. *A ſtirring Devil.*

2. *Their ſtirring Luſts.*

3. *From the difficulty of holding on, for thoſe that ſtand.*

III. *What it is to take hold of God. Here 3 things:*

1. *Our happineſs lies in this, That the Lord is within us.*

2. *Our happineſs lies in this, That the Lord is among us.*

Our taking hold of God, is our continuing his Preſence with us. Where,

1. *God may depart from thoſe with whom he hath been preſent, both*

1. *From particular perſons; and how he may depart from them, ſhewed in 5 Particulars.*

2. *From a People or Nation; and how he may be ſaid to depart from them.*

2. *It's wo with thoſe people from whom the Lord departs.*

3. *Our taking hold of God is our taking an effectual courſe to continue his Preſence with us. And this,*

1. *By caſting away our Idols.*

2. *By taking hold of the Covenant of God.*

3. *by recovering our Communion with him.*

IV. *Stirring Religion will take hold of God.*

1. *What's meant by ſtirring Religion.*

2. *Stirring Religion will take hold of God and continue his Preſence with us. For,*

1. *'Twill work out thoſe evils which provoke him to depart.*

2. *'Twill work up and increaſe thoſe good things in us, which he will not loſe or forſake.*

V. *How we ſhould ſtir up our ſelves; anſwered in the following Directions.*

1. *Make*

1. *Make an advantage of ſtirring Providences.*
2. *Put upon ſtirring Thoughts.*
3. *Get ſtirring Affections: In ſpecial ſtir up,*
   Godly Sorrow,
   Fear,
   Deſire,
   Hope.
4. *Get a ſtirring Conſcience.*
5. *Be much converſant with ſtirring Society, where are directions for the exerciſe of that neglected duty, holy and quickning diſcourſe.*
6. *Be much exerciſed in ſtirring Duties; eſpecially in*
   1. *Prayer.*
   2. *Faſting and Prayer.*

The Concuſion.

Iſaiah 64. 6, 7.

But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our Righteouſneſſes are as filthy Rags, and we all do fade as a Leaf, and our Iniquities like the Wind, have taken us away.

And there is none that calleth upon thy Name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold of thee.

IN the former of theſe Verſes, we find the Church making a double complaint *of their Sin, of their Affliction.*

1. Of their Sin; there all miſery begins, and there all our Complaints ſhould begin. We are all, not an unclean thing, but (as) an unclean thing, *Sicut quid impurum,* as the worſt of things, as any thing that's moſt filthy and unclean. There is the Uncleanneſs of a *Toad*, a Venemous deadly uncleanneſs: Our Uncleanneſs is as bad as that; our hearts are, as 'tis ſaid the evil tongue is, full of deadly Poyſon. There is the uncleanneſs of a *Leaper*, a Contagious uncleanneſs; ſuch is ours, we have infected one another, we are all infected. There is the uncleanneſs of a *Serpent*, a ſtinging uncleanneſs; ſuch is ours, our Sin hath bitten us, and ſtung us to the heart. There is the uncleanneſs of a *Dunghil*, a ſtinking uncleanneſs; ſuch is our uncleanneſs, our Iniquities

quities have made us to ſtink before the Lord: Find out any thing that's worſe, or more unclean than all theſe; whatever it be, our Sin hath made us as bad as the worſt; nothing can be ſaid too bad of Sin, and none ſpeak worſe of it than the People of God, who have the leaſt of it. Thoſe that are all Sin, carry it, as if there were nothing in ſin, no hurt in it: We cannot make Sinners underſtand, or be ſenſible what evil there is in ſin, but Saints feel it.

But it might be replyed by ſome amongſt them, Though we have our Deformity, yet we have our Beauty too; though we have our uncleanneſs, yet we have a covering for it, we have Righteouſneſs as well as Sin.

What's the Anſwer to that? Righteouſneſs? What Righteouſneſs have we? O our very Righteouſneſs is as filthy Rags; 'tis but a ragged Righteouſneſs we have, a totter'd, maimed, torn thing; the beſt we have is but as a Rag, unprofitable as a rag, not able to hide the ſhame of our nakedneſs, and as a naſty filthy rag; if we have any thing that looks better than other, 'tis all naught, our beſt is a loathſome thing.

2. *Of their Afflictions: We all fade like a Leaf, and our Iniquities like the Wind, have driven us away*, driven us into Baniſhment, driven us into Captivity, carryed us away from our Country, and from the City of our God; yea, and from the favour and preſence of our God, into a ſtrange Land, into our Enemies hands. We all do fade and wither like a Leaf; our ſin hath brought us down into a decaying, withering ſtate, and our Iniquities, like the Wind, have driven us away. Withered, faded Leaves, you ſee how they are blown down the Trees, and carryed away with every Wind, when thoſe that are green and flouriſhing keep their ſtand againſt wind and weather.

In

In verſe 7. we have an additional complaint; they go on yet further, to make a greater and a ſadder complaint againſt themſelves: And that is, and yet for all this, as bad as our caſe is, yet there is none that calleth upon thy Name. Our puniſhment found us in a polluted and waſted ſtate, and behold we grow worſe and worſe, we wither daily, Prayer fails: then which, there is not a more deadly ſymptom of a decayed ſoul. Prayer is the very breath of a Chriſtian; when Mens breath fails, they dye and turn to their Earth. Here obſerve: 1. Againſt whom this Complaint is commenced, that is, againſt the generality of the People; there is none, that is, none in compariſon, very few, if any *that call*----- 2. The matter of this additional complaint; they did not yet call upon God; though their Iniquities had brought them to the duſt, yet they had not brought them to their knees; though they had made them a Prey, yet they had not ſet them a Praying. 3. The immediate reaſon of this their neglect of God in ſuch a time, they were all aſleep, and they did not awaken, or ſtir up themſelves to take hold of God, or to ſeek after him.

There is none [*that calleth upon thy Name.*] Calling upon the Name of God, is ſometimes taken *for Prayer*, Pſal. 50. *Call upon me in the day of trouble*; that is, Pray unto God. Sometimes, as Prayer is, ſo calling upon the Name of God, is put *for all Religion*. Gen. 4. 26. *Then*, in the days of *Enoch*, *began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord*; that is, then Religion began to appear, and to break forth more viſibly in the Earth. In the Text, you may take the words as comprehending both ſenſes, Prayer in ſpecial, and all Religion in general; and indeed, that is no Praying that leads not on to all Religion.

As theſe words, *There's none that calleth upon thy Name*: Note the neglect of Prayer; in that ſenſe I have ſpoken of them elſewhere heretofore, but my preſent purpoſe is to ſpeak of them in the latter ſenſe, as the neglect of calling upon the Name of God notes the neglect of all Religion. Theſe ſeveral obſervations I ſhall hence offer to you.

Doct. 1. *The Churches ſpecial Complaints are of the Churches Sins*, of their own Sins; they caſt the firſt ſtone at themſelves. We are----not *Iſhmael* or *Edom*, or the *Philiſtins*, but the *Iſrael of God*, we are as an unclean thing. Its grievous to them to ſee and hear of the ſins of others. *I was grieved becauſe of the Tranſgreſſors*, Pſal. 119. 158. That the Uncircumciſed among us, the open Enemies of the Goſpel are ſo Wicked, ſhould be a grievous thing to us. The Idolatries and Adulteries, the Drunkenneſs and ſhameful Spewing, thoſe floods of filthineſs that overflow among ſuch, ſhould be a grief of heart to all the Saints. It is not a thing to be made ſo light of, as it is by us, that there is ſuch a Vile Generation riſen up among us, even as if Hell it ſelf were broken looſe to affront the God of Heaven, to defile his Holy Name, and to diſgrace the Throne of his Glory; this ſhould go near the hearts of all that love Chriſt and the Holineſs of the Goſpel: And there is doubtleſs a great fault among us, and it is our great Sin that we do no more lay it to heart. We tell ſtories one to another of the Wickedneſſes that are amongſt us, but we do but tell it as matter of News; but who among us are Mourners in ſecret for all theſe Abominations? If Mens hatred of Godlineſs, and the Perſecutions that they raiſe againſt it, do reach even to us, and touch our ſelves in our own particulars, as far forth as we feel their rage to light upon our ſelves, in our own Perſons or Eſtates,

ſo far forth we are apt enough to complain againſt them; but whilſt we can eſcape, and ſleep in a whole skin, all is but lightly paſs'd over. This is our great Sin, and a great Argument that our hearts are not ſo much concern'd for God, or Religion, as for our own intereſt; 'tis what we our ſelves ſuffer, not what Religion ſuffers, that goes ſo near us. Well, this ſhould be matter of our complaint and grief, that the Enemies of God are ſo wicked as they are: But yet, if we could but keep all right among our ſelves, let Enemies be as bad as they will, yet if it were with us as it ſhould be, the matter were not ſo great; though there be ſuch Flies, and ſuch Lice, and ſuch Frogs, ſuch ſwarms of Locuſt-Luſts, and wickedneſſes upon the *Egyptians* among us, yet if the People of God were more free from ſuch Verminous ſins, though there be ſuch thick darkneſs over all the Land of *Egypt*, yet if in *Goſhen* there be light, among the *Iſrael* of God, in the Churches of Chriſt; though we ſhould be as *Iſrael* was, held to the Brick-kilns, under Oppreſſion and Perſecution, yet if we might grow and multiply as they did, if the number of Saints might increaſe, and if thoſe that are, might grow more holy and ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; if it were but thus well with us that are Chriſtians, and Profeſſors of Religion, this were a comfort, how wicked ſoever the World were: But this is our miſery, and here ſhould be our ſpecial Complaints, and our great Mournings, that our Iniquities, the Iniquities of the Church, of Profeſſors of Religion, are ſo great, and ſo many as they are. [We] are all as an unclean thing; our Enemies are wicked, and we are not upright; we that name the Name of Chriſt do not depart from our Iniquities. We that pray, and hear, and profeſs to have ſeperated our ſelves from the filthineſs of the Land, to the

Law of our God; even we have tranſgreſſed the Covenant of the Lord. What haltings and Hypocriſies are there among us? What Revolters and Backſliders are many of us become! What Heart-Idolatries are there to be found among us? What Pride, and what Covetouſneſs, and what Quarrellings and Contentions do there abound, even amongſt us! What Sleepers and Loyterers and Triflers are we? What a luke-warm Generation do we ſhew our ſelves? How little of the Purity, and Spirit, and Life of Religion is there going amongſt us? Self-love, and Self-ſeeking, and Fleſh-pleaſing, and Men-pleaſing, and an exceſſive heat and zeal for our carnal things, how hath it eaten up the Zeal of God, and the Spirit of Chriſtianity, ſo that we may complain with the Apoſtle, *Phil.* 2. 21. *All ſeek their own, and not the things of Chriſt*: Certainly Friends, this ſhould be our great Lamentation, and let it be for a Lamentation to us before the Lord. Let us complain, let us lament that Religion, which hath ſo many Enemies, hath ſo many falſe Friends; that that which is ſo hunted by the profane Hunters, ſo ſhot at by the Uncircumciſed Archers, doth receive its greateſt wounds in the Houſes and by the hands of its Friends; that the Circumciſion is become as Uncircumciſion, that whilſt the ſtripes of the ungodly are upon our backs, our own filthineſs is yet in our skirts. Let us lament not only the ſpreading evils that abound amongſt the generality of Profeſſors, but let us eſpecially lament, every one of us, that our own hands are alſo in the Tranſgreſſion: There's a decay grown amongſt Profeſſors, but let us enquire, Lord am not I, even I, one of the decayed ſouls? There are worldly greedy Profeſſors, whoſe hearts are gone after their Covetouſneſs, and O Lord, am not I gone in the Company? There are Hypocrites, there are

Idlers

Idlers, a company of cold and luke-warm ſouls, and am not I ſuch a one my ſelf? O my my ſoul! art thou faithful to God? Have I kept my Covenant? Have I kept mine Heart, and kept my Watch, and kept my Way? Have not I wandred with them that wander, and fallen with them that fall? Let this be our Lamenting; let us take up a Lamentation *together*, let us joyn our Sighs, and mingle our Tears; let us Lament together, and let us alſo, as *Zech.* 12. 12. mourn every one of us *apart*, and our Families apart; our Wives apart, and our Children apart; for our Perſonal ſins, and our Family-ſins, that neither we, nor our own Houſes have had our hearts ſo with God, but that the Lord hath a Controverſie with us.

Doct. 2. *Chriſtians ſhould not palliate or mince their own ſins in their Confeſſions, but give them their due aggravations.*

What could the Church ſay more againſt themſelves then they do in the Text? We are all as an unclean thing, very Vile, full of Diſeaſes and Sores, and our very Righteouſneſs is as filthy Rags. They do not hide or leſſen their ſins; they ſay not, *as bad as we are, others are worſe*; 'tis not, *we have been faulty*, We are not as good as we ſhould be, we have our ſpots and our failing, as who have not? But they ſpeak it out with a full mouth, our Iniquities are multiplied, our Iniquities are marked before the Lord, and have mark'd us out for a company of unclean and polluted ſouls; we cannot hide it, and we will not hide it; we can neither hide nor leſſen it, 'tis too true, 'tis too evident; we muſt confeſs it, and we will confeſs it, that we are a naughty People: not ſo bad as others? Why others never pretended to any good, never made that Profeſſion that we have made, never had the advantages that we have had:

had; there can be no excuſe for us, we ſhould have been better, and we might have been better; but what ever we ſhould have been, or might have been, we are very bad, we are all as an unclean thing: Thus did that great Apoſtle, when he ſpeaks of Sinners, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. *Of whom* (ſayes he) *I am chief.*

Friends, whatever your faults are, do not mince the matter, do not count your errors little Errors, your Sins, little Sins: Be ſure of this, that mincing is not the way to mending. Shame your ſelves before the Lord, abaſe your ſelves in his ſight; ſtudy the greatneſs of thoſe you count your little ſins; rip open your hearts, and find out what a neſt of Wickedneſs is there; ranſack your ways, and ſee what a courſe of Folly and Vanity is to be found there, and do not go about to hide them: *He that covereth his Sins ſhall not proſper,* Prov. 28. 13. Do not go about to hide them, but confeſs them, and ſpread them before the Lord, till your ſoul be aſhamed. O that this Word might ſend us to our homes, every one of us with an aking heart, and a bluſhing face, that it might make us all fall down before our God, with *Ezra*'s words in our mouth, *Ezra* 9. 6. *O my God, I am aſhamed, and bluſh to lift up my face to thee, my God, for our Iniquities are increaſed over our head, and our Treſpaſſes are grown up unto the Heavens.* Let us bluſh at our Hypocriſie, let us bluſh at our Luke-warmneſs, let us bluſh at our Worldlines and Carnality; let us bluſh in our Prayers, let us go bluſhing home, and weeping as we go; let us acknowledge we all are as an unclean thing, and our Righteouſneſs is as filthy Rags.

Doct. 3. *Conſumption upon Profeſſors is the high way to Confuſion and Diſſipation.* If we wither and fade as a Leaf, our Iniquities as the wind will ſcat-

ter and drive us away. If grey hairs be upon us, death and deſtruction is near.

Beloved, you can hardly be ignorant what complaints there are, even from all quarters of our Land, what a decay there is grown even every where upon Profeſſors of Religion; and whether this conſuming Diſeaſe hath not ſeized upon many of us here, I leave it to your own Conſciences to judge; the conſideration hereof, hath engaged me to enlarge on this ſubject, beyond what I at firſt intended; and I beſeech you every one, to ſet your hearts upon the words I ſhall ſpeak, ſo as both to make a narrow enquiery each one into himſelf, whether you be grown into ſuch a decay, and to endeavour for a ſpeedy recovery. I remember how it hath been with this Congregation, when our Aſſembling together was in one place, what a glorious and hopeful Morning appeared? What a Spring-tide there was of Converts flowing in to the Lord, and what a day-light of warm and holy affections then brake forth amongſt us; whether our day hath continued its brightneſs, accordring to the ſpring of our Morning, let us ſadly conſider before the Lord.

Now in proſecution of the Doctrine mention'd, I ſhall firſt a little open this conſuming Diſeaſe to you, and ſhew you, that even Chriſtians may be ſadly ſurprized by it; and then ſhew you, that where it proves Epidemical and General, there this Conſumption is a fore-runner of confuſion.

For the firſt, know, there is a two-fold decay or conſumption in Religion.

Partial.

Total.

1. *Partial* or gradual, a declining or conſuming in ſome degree; a growing into a worſe caſe than ſometimes we were; a growing weak and cold, and remiſs

in our Religion; an abateing or looſing our former care, ſtrength, life, affection, and vigour of ſoul; and this may be incident to real Chriſtians, who are ſubject to decay.

Inwardly.
Outwardly.

1. *Inwardly*, in the caſe and ſtate of their ſouls in the inward Man; they may be *Back-ſliders in heart*, as the expreſſion is, *Prov.* 14. 14. Particularly,

1. *There may be a ſhaking of their Faith*: The principles and foundations of Chriſtianity may be ſhaken; there may be a failing of the firmneſs of their belief of the truth of the Goſpel, and ſome declinings towards Infidelity and Atheiſm. Of *Himeneus* and *Philetus* 'tis ſaid, 2 *Tim.* 2. 18. that they *erred concerning the truth, and overthrew the Faith of ſome*; and as they overthrew the Faith of ſome, ſo probably they might ſhake the Faith of more.

2. *There may be a decay or wearing out the ſenſe of the importance of thoſe truths of the Goſpel, that they do believe.* Though the Goſpel may ſtill be received as an undoubted and unqueſtionable truth, though the evidence of its truth may be ſo clear as that they cannot contradict or queſtion it, yet the weight of it may not be ſo much felt upon their hearts; the truths believed may not be ſo much minded, nor ſo throughly conſidered as to leave any powerful impreſſions of them upon their hearts. Thoſe great things, the worth and value of a ſoul, the dreadfulneſs of looſing a ſoul, the danger that they are in of looſing their ſouls, the excellency and neceſſity of Chriſt, the eternal weight of glory, the everlaſting Vengeance of God againſt the Unrighteouſneſs of Men, though all theſe things be believed and acknowledged, yet they may not for the time be ſo duly minded and meditated on; they may be ſo much out of their eye, out

of their thoughts, that the ſenſe of them, and the efficacy of that ſenſe may ſeem even to be utterly loſt, Friends, 'tis not the being of theſe great things, no, nor the bare believing that they are, but the minding and frequent conſidering them, the having that height and depth, that life and death in our eye, that will affect and work upon the heart; and Chriſtians, through their own careleſneſs and heedleſneſs, may have even loſt the ſight both of Heaven and Hell. Things preſent may have ſo filled and overpower'd their hearts, as to put things to come quite out of mind; the heart may be ſo bewitch'd by this preſent world, ſo ſurrounded with a croud of carnal pleaſures and delights, ſo ſwallowed up of worldly cares and contrivances, ſo intent upon our worldly buſineſs and commodity, that we may hereupon drive ſo heavily on in the matters of Eternity, as if we had forgotten that we had a Chriſt or a ſoul to be minded.

3. *There may be a decay, as of ther Faith* (as before) *ſo of all other their inward Grates and vital operations.* Hence 'tis that the Apoſtle prays ſo earneſtly for them, 1 *Pet.* 5. 10. *The God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal Glory, by Jeſus Chriſt, eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, ſettle you.* We ſhould every one of us prove unſtable ſouls, and ſhall never ſtand if the God of Grace do not ſtabliſh us; we are every one of us weak ſouls, and ſhall certainly fall, and come to nothing if the God of grace do not ſtrengthen and ſettle us. And therefore we had need to pray, and that earneſtly, every one of us, the God of all grace ſtregthen me; the God of all grace ſtabliſh and ſettle this my weak and unſtable ſoul. Hence alſo Chriſtians are exhorted, *Rom.* 3. 11. *Hold faſt what thou haſt,* keep that good thing which is committed unto thee: And ſo we had need every one of us to call upon our ſelves; hold faſt O my ſoul, hold faſt to Chriſt,

Chriſt, hold faſt to Holineſs; haſt thou gotten any Grace, any ſound Religion into thine heart? Hold it faſt that thou loſe it not. Our Candle will burn dim, there is a Thief in the Candle which will waſt it away, if it be not carefully ſnuffed and look'd to. Grace in the heart, is as a ſpark of fire in the Hearth, it will be cover'd over with Aſhes, if it be not kept continually blowing; the ruſt will eat out our Gold, the Moth will fret out our Garments, the Thief will ſteal away our Treaſure if it be not watchfully maintained. O what Loſſes do many Chriſtians actually ſuffer through their careleſneſs and negligence; loſs in their Love, loſs in their Life, and Zeal, and all their holy Affections, that little good that is in them, may grow to ſuch a decay, that it may be *ready to dye*, and come to nothing; and as their Grace, which is their Life, decays, ſo their vital operations fail with it. All their ſenſible and ſweet communion with God will be hindred; the warm and lively workings of their hearts upon God, their thoughts and meditations on God, their deſires after Him, their delights in the Lord, the ſecret entercourſes of love betwixt the Lord and them will much ceaſe when grace flags: Whilſt grace is kept alive, the thoughts of God will be many and precious, *Pſal.* 139. 17. *How precious are thy thoughts to me O Lord? how great is the ſum of them?* Their Meditations of him will be ſweet, a reviving and refreſhing to their hearts. Have you none of you ſometimes found it ſo? Have you not poured out your ſouls into his Boſom, and felt the Lord pouring in his Wine and his Oyle into yours? Have you not walk'd with him upon the Mount, and ſate down under his ſhadow with great delight, and found his Fruits ſweet to your taſt? Have you not ſometimes rejoyc'd in his Preſence, and felt the joy of the Lord to be your ſtrength? And

then,

then, O what Love hath ſtreamed forth, O what Praiſes have been ſent up to His Bleſſed Name! This, if ever you have experienced ſuch Bleſſed ſeaſons, hath been maintained from the life of Grace in you; and according as Grace ſinks, or gathers ruſt, and grows dim, ſo doe not all your vital operations fail with it? I need not ſpend time to prove that ſuch ſinking and decaying of our Spirits, our Graces, and the comfortable operations of them, may be, the experiences of Chriſtians do too fully, and too frequently yield us undeniable proofes.

2. *There may be outward decays*, decays in point of practiſe. There may be a neglect of the *duties* of Prayer, Hearing, Meditation, Examining, and taking an account of our ſelves, *Iſa.* 43. 22. *Thou haſt not called upon me, O* Jacob! *thou haſt been weary of me, O* Iſrael. I can ſeldom hear of thee; thou [haſt] been a Praying People, a Sacrificing People, but thou art grown weary of my worſhip. How ſeldom art thou found in thy Cloſet, or in the Congregation? Thou art become a very Stranger to thoſe duties which once were thy delight: Or if duties be performed, yet the heart and the life of them may be loſt; their Sacrifices may be without an heart; if they bring their Incenſe, yet there may be no fire to kindle it; dead Praying, cold Praying muſt ſuffice them. O how do our Spirits often freeze in thoſe Devotions which ſhould kindle a fire in us! Some Mens duties ſerve for nothing, but to keep them aſleep, and to keep Conſcience quiet, which if there ſhould be a total neglect, would flye in there faces and awaken them. There may be a decay in *their Converſations*; they may decline from a Spiritual to a Carnal converſation, from an Heavenly to an Earthly Life. Thoſe that had once eſcaped the pollutions of the world, may be again entangled in the world.

2 *Pet.*

2 *Pet.* 2. 20. There may be a declining from a savoury, useful, to an unsavoury and unprofitable life; the Salt of the Earth may have lost its savour; those very Tongues, whose speech was used to be with Grace, seasoned with Salt, Ministring Grace to the Hearers, may either be dumb and speak nothing, or else be employed to speak Vanity. How long may we be in some Professors company e're we hear a savoury word from their lips; or if any good does come, how heartless and lifeless is it? In what they do, they move like Puppets; in what they speak, they speak like Parrots, that which they have learn'd by rote, but without any true sense of what themselves do speak.

Such decays as these, both inward decays and outward decays may be grown upon Christians. Such declining souls are a miserable Spectacle, the reproach of the Gospel, the disgrace of Religion, that are more like Carkases, or Ghosts, than living souls; Idol Christians, that have Eyes, and see not; Ears, and hear not; Tongues, and speak not; Feet, and walk not: Such, who if they have any thing of Religion in them, no body in the world is like to have the benefit of it, nor themselves the comfort of it. They may be stark dead, and dryed up at the roots, they may be meer Chaff and Stubble for ought any body else, or themselves either can say to the contrary: These dry Trees, how-ever they stand in the Vineyard, they may stand there for Fuel for the fire, and not for Fruit. Such miserable Spectacles are withering Professors, and yet what multitudes of them are there to be seen?

Friends, let us consider our selves, with respect to the perticulars mentioned; if we have not denyed the Faith, and become down-right Infidels, and Atheists; if we believe God and the Gospel, and the great

great and wonderful things of the world to come; yet are there not many of us that have loſt the ſenſe of the weight and importance of thoſe great things? Have not the lean and ill-favoured Kine eaten up the fat ones? Have not the thin and the blighted Ears ſmitten and deſtroyed the full ones? Hath not this Earth, and the buſineſſes thereof, choaked up ſome of our hearts, and left little ſenſe of God, or Immortality upon us? Particularly conſider,

1. Do we live as People that do verily believe we muſt ſhortly be in another world, where we muſt eternally reap the fruit of our doings here? Do we live as Men that have that Eternity in our eye, and the lively ſenſe upon our hearts of that Death and Judgment, that glorious Reward and eternal Puniſhment that is before us? Sure we do not: O how few of us do thus live! Do we Pray, and Hear, and Buy, and Sell, and Converſe in the World, as Men that ſee and look for ſo great a change? Was there never a time when we felt more of the Eternal things upon our hearts than now? Was there never a time when we were more ſerious, and in good earneſt in our Religion? When we were more deeply engaged in laying up Treaſure in Heaven, and making an eſcape from the Wrath to come? Was there never a time, when ſuch ſerious queſtions, *What muſt I do to be Saved? What if I ſhould be Damned, ſhut out of the everlaſting Kingdom, ſhut up in everlaſting darkneſs? What may I do to pleaſe God, and to walk worthy of his holy Calling, and to make ſure of a part in Chriſt?* Was there never a time when ſuch Queſtions were more ordinarily put than now, and when we were more ſolicitous about the having them anſwered?

2. How is it with our particular Graces, and inward vital Operations? Do we retain our firſt Faith? Do we hold out in our firſt Love? Where are thoſe

warm and lively affections that discovered themselves in the infancy of our new Birth? Time was when some of us were all in a flame of Love, and Life, and Zeal for God, when we had melting affections, mourning, tender hearts, when our spirits were hotly working within us about God, and the things of God; when we could not live, nor be at ease, but under the influences of Heaven, and the illapses and intimations of the Divine Love and good will to our souls; when Communion with God, and entercourses with Heaven were sweeter to us than our appointed Food; was there never such a time with some of you? And is it so now? Or are not these matters sadly changed with you, from what they once were? May you not say with the Psalmist, *Psal.* 77. 3. 5. *I remember the days of old, and am troubled?* I remember my pleasant things, my pleasant Houses, the sweet and delightful entercourses I had with the Lord; I remember these things, and am troubled to see what a fall there is from what once I enjoyed?

3. And how is it in your duties and in your lives? Is the old spirit of Prayer kept up with you? Hath the Lord such constant Visits, such affectionate Visits from you as he was wont to have? Are your Sighs, are your Tears, are your Souls poured out in Praying, and in striving and wrestling with the Lord in Prayer, as formerly they have been? And is there such a vein of serious Religion running through your whole lives? Do you eat and drink, work together, and converse together in the Spirituality and singleness of heart, which the Primitive Christians did, *Act.* 2. 46. and which sometimes some of you did? Is it your care to exhort and quicken, and build up, and provoke one another to love, and to good works? Is there that Watchfulness over your goings, that di-

ligence

ligence in inſtructing, in governing, and educating your Families in the fear and knowledge, and worſhip of God, as hath been? Or muſt you not take up a Lamentation over your ſelves, and fall to judging and condemning your ſelves, ſome of you at leaſt, upon moſt of theſe accounts, and cry out in bitterneſs, O my ſoul, how art thou fallen?

Friends, let not theſe words paſs as words of courſe, let them enter into your hearts, and ſtick in your ſides, and be a wound in your very ſouls.

Let me, upon all this that hath been ſaid, put the queſtion yet again to you all: How is it with you? How is it with your ſouls? What, do ye hold your own, or are ye at a loſs? What, Proſpering or Periſhing? Flouriſhing or Withering? Upon the wing, and mounting upwards as the Eagles, or upon the Duſt with the Worms? Friends, pray conſider, who among you can ſay, I thank the Lord, my ſoul is upon the increaſing hand; through the grace of God, my Soul is maintained in Life, and I am reaching forward, and getting a little ground Heaven-ward daily; through rich mercy, the Grace that hath been beſtowed on me, hath not been beſtowed in vain: I cannot deny the goodneſs of God to me; I have good hopes that it's ſomething better with me than it has been? Some of you, I hope, can ſpeak thus, to the praiſe of the glory of the grace of God with you: But I fear too many, even of you that are Profeſſors, muſt give a ſadder Anſwer. How is it with my ſoul? O the Lord be merciful to me, 'tis but in a poor and pittiful caſe; Lord I pine, Lord I am fallen, I am fallen. With my outward man 'tis well enough, but O mine inner man withers, my Religion vaniſheth, my poor ſoul languiſheth, my grace periſheth; much of it is loſt, and that which remains, is dying daily; I took it all along to be well enough; but

now I think on't, O 'tis a miſerable decay that is grown upon me.

Beloved, I have told you already what complaints there are of decays from other places; and now conſider, is not the Moth come into this Congregation? Is not the Worm eating at [our] root alſo? Compare the preſent ſpirit and temper that is too generally upon us, with what it was in our firſt meetings at *Seimours* Court; ſure there appeared another manner of warm, lively, ſerious, affectionate ſpirit then, than is to be found but in very few of us at this day. What, hath ſo many years Preaching and Praying, and Sacraments we have had ſince, had no better ſucceſs than this? Have you been hearing all this while to your loſs? and Praying to your loſs, and had Sacraments to your loſs? O that every one of you now, would lay his hand on his own heart, and faithfully enquire where be the decayed ſouls among us, Lord is it I? Lord, am not I one of them? Do not think now to excuſe the matter; do not tell me, we hope 'tis not ſo bad, your fear of us is more than you have ground for: O that I were miſtaken in you, that it were better with you then according to my Jealouſies: But I muſt tell you, if you have not the ſame fears, ſome of you, concerning your ſelves, I doubt 'tis becauſe you have no more obſerved your ſelves, nor ſo throughly conſidered your ſelves how 'tis with you.

Well, let theſe hints humble us, and lay us low before the Lord. Let theſe words ſtartle us, and awaken us, and prepare us towards our recovery. Thus much touching the partial decay.

2. *There is a total decay*, or Apoſtaſie from the Faith. If thoſe that are real Chriſtians do not, yet many high Profeſſors may, ye, and are become Apoſtates from Chriſt. Such as theſe:

1. *Ne-*

1. *Never brought forth any fruit to perfection*, Luk. 8. 14. Neither the right fruits, nor any ripe fruits, it's rotten before 'tis ripe; and when 'tis at beſt, it's rotten at the Core.

2. *The Fruit they had falls off.*

3. *Not only their Fruit falls off, but their Leaves:* They decline in the practiſe, and fall off from the profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

4. *Their Root is dryed up and withered:* The Faith they had, fails, and they become down-right Atheiſts or Infidels. But I ſhall not enlarge here.

2. *Conſumption in Religion, where it proves Epidemical, is the fore-runner of Confuſion.* What-ever influence the wickedly profane may have upon the removal of the Goſpel, that which moſt certainly provokes the Lord to caſt off, is the decay and Apoſtaſie of Profeſſors, *Rev.* 2. 5. *Remember whence thou art fallen, and do thy firſt works, or I will come unto thee quickly, and remove thy Candleſtick out of its place.*

To ſet home what hath been ſpoken: You that are Back-ſliders, conſider this one word; that what-ever become of us, as to our general caſes, as to the particular caſes of your own ſouls, this Conſumption, if it be not ſpeedily recovered, is like to be mortal. You that are ſick of this withering Diſeaſe, look to it in time, leſt your ſickneſs be unto death, even to death Eternal. You that are Back-ſliders, think not that your ſouls are ſafe, by that of Chriſtianity which you have already attained, but know, that your drawing back may be unto Perdition. You that have begun to fall, tremble to think where this fall may end. You may ſink and ſink, and fall lower and lower, and never ſtop till you come to the bottom of Hell, and ſo by your total and final Apoſtacy, you may prove, that what-ever you think, you never had the truth of Chriſtianity in you. O

remember this word, and let it awaken you in time.

Now I come to the chief Doctrines intended.

Doct. 1. *Its the duty of the People of God, to ſtir up themſelves in the matters of Religion.*

Doct. 2. *Stirring Religion will take hold of God.* I ſhall handle them both together, and ſhew,

1. *What it is to ſtir up our ſelves in the matters of Religion.*

2. *What need we have to ſtir up our ſelves.*

3. *What 'tis to take hold of God.*

4. *That ſtirring Religion will take hold of God.*

5. *How we ſhould ſtir up our ſelves.*

1. *What 'tis to ſtir up our ſelves in the matters of Religion.* There is,

1. *A ſtirring up our ſelves to Religion, or to get Religion where there is none.*

2. *A ſtirring up our ſelves in Religion,* where there is ſomething of it already.

1. *There is a ſtirring up our ſelves to Religion.* There are ſome that are utter ſtrangers to Religion, that have nothing of God or Religion in them. *Some men have not the knowledge of God, I ſpeak this to your ſhame,* 1 Cor. 15. 34. It is a ſhameful thing that there ſhould be any in the Churches of Chriſt, without the knowledge of God: Ignorant perſons are the ſhame of Congregations: We may be all aſhamed that there are ſo many among us that have no knowledge. Thou that art an Ignorant Man, the People of God may be all aſhamed of thee, it is a ſhame to our Congregation that there is ſuch a blind ſoul amongſt us; but yet ſuch there are.

Some that have a little knowledge of God, have yet *no ſenſe of God* or Religion upon them; Men of *a Reprobate mind,* Rom. 1. 28. Sottiſh ſenſeleſs ſouls, voyd of judgment, and voyd of ſenſe. Nothing of God will affect them, or work upon them: Inſtruct them

them while we will, Preach to them while we will, nothing will enter into them or move them at all; we cannot beat any ſenſe of God, of their Souls, of Religion into them.

Others, if they have ſome knowledge and ſome little ſenſe of God and Religion, yet have no *true Religion* in them. They know ſomething of God, know ſomething of Religion, yet ſtill are without Chriſt, and without God in the world. They have ſomething of it in their heads, but nothing of it in their hearts, or their lives. Or if there be ſome little touches of it upon them, yet there's no ſound or ſaving work upon them; they are Profeſſors of Religion, but they are Hypocrites, utterly voyd of the Saving grace or work of God: They are among the Diſciples of Chriſt, and go for Diſciples, but they are not of them, as 1 *John* 2. 19. They think themſelves to be ſomething, think themſelves to be Chriſtians, but are nothing, but deceive their own ſelves. Some have no Religion, *and care not whether they have or no*; do not at all concern themſelves about Religion: It does not enter into their thoughts to mind any ſuch thing; they have no deſire to be otherwiſe than they are, but are quiet and well contented to continue as they are.

How is it with you Sinners, that are here before the Lord? Some of you have not the knowledge of God, are without Chriſt, are yet in your ſins; and O how little ſenſe have you of your need of Chriſt? How little deſire have you to be changed, and delivered from this ſtate you are in? Do not you feel that your hearts are at reſt in your preſent caſe? Are there any hearty wiſhes? O that the Lord would change my heart! O that I might be brought into Chriſt, and to fear God in truth? No, you mind not, nor take any care about any ſuch thing; as little of

God, or Religion as you have, you care not whither ever you have more than you have.

Now such as these, that have no Religion in them, their work is, to stir up themselves (to) Religion, or to get Religion into them; and this stirring up themselves to Religion, stands in these things.

1. *In bethinking themselves how 'tis with them, and what they have to do.*

2. *In crying out for help, and recovery out of their sin and misery.*

3. *In taking the Alarm from the Watch-men.*

4. *In forceing themselves back from their sins, and onwards to Christ.*

1. *There must be a bethinking themselves how 'tis with them.* This is the first step they are to make towards Religion, to bethink themselves how 'tis with them, 1 *King.* 8. 47. *If they shall bethink themselves*; that's the first work, and then, *v.* 48. *If they shall return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul.* Sinners must bethink themselves,

1. *What they are at present.*

2. *What they are to do for the future.*

1. *Sinners must bethink themselves what they are*, and what a woful state they are in. What have I of the fear or knowledge of God in me? Am I a Christian? Have I any thing of saving Religion in me? Am not I a blind, senseless, careless soul, that have not so much as made any profession of Religion? I live without Prayer, never pray in secret, no Prayer in my Family, no such thing as minding God or my Soul. I eat and drink, I lye down and rise up, I work, and trade, and follow my business for this world; but as for the other World, I confess I take little care about it; or if I have minded it more than some others, and have made a little profession of Christianity, yet am I not still an Hypocri-

tical

tical Profeſſor? Is this my caſe? Am I without Chriſt ſhort of ſaving-Religion? What can I think of my ſelf and my preſent condition? Sure as little as I have been troubled at it, it is a woful caſe I am in. What, yet in my ſins, and under the power of the Devil, and in a ſtate of Damnation? I had need look about me before I be paſt remedy.

2. *They muſt bethink themſelves what they mean to do.* What, ſhall I continue in this caſe till I dye? or ſhall I make out after an eſcape? Sinners, 'tis a fearful ſtate you are in, you are miſerable ſouls if you have no Religion in you. But pray now bethink your ſelves, what do you mean to do for the future? Will you go on as you are? Will you take no more care for your ſouls then you have done? nor look after no more Religion than you have gotten? What do you mean Sinners? Put your hearts to it, bethink you what you mean to do. What, will you not be perſwaded to thus much? Will you not ſo much as think with your ſelves, what ſhall I hence-forth do? Shall I venture it as I am, or ſhall I make out after an eſcape, out of this fearful condition? If you were come to this, to bethink your ſelves what a wretched caſe your ſouls are in, and how you may do to eſcape it; you had then gotten the firſt ſtep in this work of ſtirring up your ſelves to Religion.

2. *Crying out for help, and recovery out of this wretched ſtate.* When the ſoul falls a crying once, a crying for help and recovery, then it begins to ſtir to ſome purpoſe; and this kind of ſtirring ſtands.

1. *In crying out upon [themſelves] to ſeek out for help.* When the Sinner, being brought to a ſenſe of his miſery and danger, cryes out to himſelf as thoſe Lepers, 2 *King.* 7. 8. cryes one to another, *Why ſit we here till we dye?* Or as the Marriners to *Jonah*,

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Chap. 1. 6. *Ariſe Sleeper, call upon thy God, careſt thou not that thou periſh?* Thou art ready to periſh O my ſoul; if I continue as I am, I dye for't; if I can get no more of God, or of Religion and Chriſtianity than I have hitherto gotten, I muſt to Hell, I muſt burn for ever and ever. Awaken O my ſleepy heart; to thy Knees, to thy Prayers, call upon thy God, that thou periſh not. Sinners, how often have we been crying to you? Crying upon you to conſider your ways; crying upon you to amend your ways, to Repent and return unto the Lord, to get you new hearts, and to betake your ſelves to a new Life? How often have you heard that word, *Ezek.* 18. 32. *Why will ye dye? Turn and live.* We have been long crying thus in your ears, but there's ſcarce a Sinner ſtirs for all this; but you remain a company of ſtupid ſleepy ſouls. O Sinners, after all our crying thus upon you, when will you cry out upon your ſelves? When will you take this word from Miniſters mouths, when we cry to you, *Repent Sinner, go to Chriſt Sinner*, and ſpeak it to your ſelves, *O my ſoul Repent, haſten thee in to Chriſt, O my ſoul?* Are there any of you now, whoſe hearts cry thus to themſelves, Away, O my ſoul, go to God, go to Chriſt for his help, to ſave thee out of this wretched ſtate, that thou periſh not everlaſtingly? There would be ſome more hope in this.

2. *In crying out to the Lord, to give help in this time of need* Crying out to the Lord for help, is both an Argument that the heart is awakened, that Conſcience is ſtirring, and fears are ſtirring, and deſires are ſtirring, and it is the ſtirring of the heart. There may be a cold ſaying, *God help me*, when the heart is ſtill aſleep; but when *it cryes out*, then 'tis a ſign 'tis awakened: When the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 12. had a ſight what a wicked world this world was become,

come, and was affected with the ſight, then he crys out, *Help Lord*, for the Godly Man ceaſeth, the Wicked walk on every ſide, and the Vileſt Men are exalted: And as the ſight of ſuch a wicked world was to him, ſo ſhould the ſight of a wicked heart be to a Sinner. O my wicked heart, what a world of wickedneſs is it! How full of deadly Poyſon; Grace is not; the good that was in it, is ceaſed and periſhed, and every vile thing is to be found in it, Envy, and Malice, and Luſt, and Falſhood, and Folly, and Enmity againſt God; what a Fountain of Wickedneſs is within me? O what an heart have I? Help Lord, ſave me from this wicked heart, ſave me, or I periſh. This is an hopeful ſtirring.

Sinners, how is it that you yet ſtir not? what hearts have you? Open your Eyes, and look a little inward: Is there not ſin within you, with all its Curſes and Plagues? Is not that heart of thine become like that City of Abominations, *Babylon*, of which 'tis ſaid, *Iſa.* 13. 21. *Ziim* and *Okim* dwell there, and all manner of doleful Creatures, the Cormorant and the Bittern, Owles and Satyrs, and Dragons? Is not that heart of thine a very Den of Dragons and Serpents? Every Luſt of thine heart is a Serpent, a Dragon, and an Adder, which as tame as they lye, that thou feeleſt them not, are devouring thy ſoul. Every Sinner among you have ſuch an heart; an (heart) full of Serpents, an heart full of Dragons. O how is it that there is not a cry among you, Lord help; ſave Lord, ſave me from this miſerable heart? But behold for all this, there's ſcarce a ſoul ſtirs; all quiet and faſt aſleep, and fears nothing. I'le tell you Sinners, if you did but underſtand your hearts, and what there is within you; if we could help you to a ſight of thoſe crauling Serpents, and ſtinging Adders, and ſtinking Ulcers that

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are within you, 'twould ſcare you out of your ſecurity, and put you to the cry, Lord ſave, or I am loſt.

3. *In crying to the Men of God,* the Servants and Miniſters of Chriſt. When Miniſters have been crying to Sinners, *Men and Brethren, ſave your ſelves:* If our Word ſtir'd them, we ſhould have them crying to us, *What muſt we do to be ſaved?* How may we eſcape, and be delivered from the wrath to come? So we find it with thoſe, *Act.* 2. 37. when *Peter's* word pricked them to the heart, they cryed out, *Men and Brethren* (*what*) *ſhall we do?* And ſo the Jaylor, *Act.* 16. 30. When the Lord Preached to him by an Earth-quake, and ſhook his heart, he cryed out to the Apoſtles, (*Sirs*), *what muſt I do to be ſaved?* Such cryes ſhould we hear from all the Sinners amongſt you, could our Words once ſhake your hearts. Help, O men of God, help me out of this miſerable ſtate; help by your Prayers, help by your Counſels, Pray for a poor loſt Soul, Preach to a poor miſerable Creature, tell me what I muſt do; help me to know the Lord, ſhew me the path of Life. Thus far that wicked one, *Simon Magus*, was ſtirred, when *Peter* had ſet his ſin and his miſery home upon him, *Act.* 8. 24. *Pray for me,* ſays he, Pray to the Lord for me, that none of theſe things come upon me. What am I in the gall of bitterneſs, and in the bond of Iniquity? For the Lord's ſake help me out, Pray to the Lord for me, that I abide not in this Condition.

O how few ſuch ſtirring Conſciences, how few ſuch awakened Sinners can we find among you? When do we hear one of all the Sinners here comeing to us with ſuch a queſtion, Sirs, what ſhall I do, what muſt I do to be ſaved? When do we hear any ſuch Requeſt to us; Pray for me, O pray me out of

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the hands of my Drunken Companions, Pray me out of my Covetouſneſs, pray that the Lord would deliver me from this hard heart, from this blind mind, from this froward ſpirit; pray that the Lord would convince and convert my ſoul? Sinners, I doubt, that how well ſoever you ſometimes ſpeak of the Preaching you hear, yet I doubt it doth not reach your hearts: For mine own part, I do not remember the time when any one Sinner among you did ever ſeriouſly put the queſtion to me, What muſt I do to be ſaved.

This is the ſecond thing, wherein Sinners ſtirring up themſelves towards Religion, ſtands in their crying out for help.

3. *In taking the Alarme from the Watch-men.* God hath ſent forth his Miniſters to Alarm this ſinful world, *Joel* 2.1. *Blow ye the Trumpet in* Zion, *ſound an Alarm in my holy Mountain,* Iſa. 48. 1. *Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy Voyce like a Trumpet, tell my People their Tranſgreſſions, and the Houſe of* Iſrael *their ſins.* What is the uſe of an Alarm? Why to awaken, and to declare to People that there is VVar making upon them, that there is an Enemy near, that they are in danger of periſhing, if they ſuddenly look not to themſelves. *Thus will I do to thee*; that is, I will do terrible things to thee, *Therefore prepare to meet thy God, O* Iſrael. That was *Amos* his Alarm to *Iſrael,* Amos 4. *Yet forty days and* Nineveh *ſhall be deſtroyed*; that was *Jonahs* Alarm to *Nineveh,* Jon. 3.4. *The Axe is laid to the root of the Tree,* God is making ſhort work with Sinners, *Every Tree that bringeth not forth good fruit ſhall be cut down and caſt into the Fire*; that's *John-Baptiſt*'s Alarm, *Mat.* 3. 10. *The times of this Ignorance God winked at, but now he commandeth all Men every where to Repent; for he hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in*

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Righteouſneſs; that's *Paul*'s Alarm, *Act.* 17. 30, 31. The like Alarms are the Miniſters of Chriſt ſounding in Sinners ears every day; Repent, or ye ſhall Periſh, Believe, or ye ſhall be Damned, be Converted or ye ſhall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. The moſt of Sinners, for all this, ſtir not, but ſleep on: Hath not the Alarm been ſounded amongſt you? And yet how few Sinners of you are there, whoſe ſouls are not faſt aſleep to this day? We have cryed unto you as *Dalilah* to *Sampſon*, *Ariſe* Sampſon, *the* Philiſtins *are upon thee*: Ariſe Sinner, the Devil is upon thee, Sin lyes at the door, the Judge ſtands at the door, Death is ready to dart thee thorow, Hell opens her mouth for thee, and behold nothing will do to awaken you. We give the Alarm, but you will not take the Alarm: This is the ſtirring of the ſoul which I am Preaching of, when Sinners are Alarmed, and *take the Alarms*; when the VVord Preached ſets Conſcience a Preaching, and thundering upon Sinners, when Conſcience calls to them, turn to the Lord, break off thy ſins by Repentance; thou art a dead Man if thou go on, there's but a ſtep betwixt thee and everlaſting death; thou wilt be in, thou wilt be ſwallowed up of the eternal Furnace if thou ſuddenly Repent not. When Mens hearts thus take the Alarm, and their Conſciences being ſtartled, do fall to work with them, and provoke them to look after God and his Grace: This is another thing wherein this ſtirring ſtands.

4. *In forcing themſelves back from their ſins, and onwards to Chriſt.* Though in a proper ſenſe, there can be no coaction of the will, yet ſuch violence may be uſed towards our ſelves, as in our common ſpeech, we call forcing of our ſelves. So *Saul*, 1 Sam. 13. 12. *I forced my ſelf, and offered a Burnt-offering.* Sinners ſhould lay violent hands as it were

upon their hearts, pulling them back from ſin, putting them on to Chriſt. Sinners muſt do by their hearts as the Angels did by *Lot*, *Gen.* 19. 16. When they were haſtening him out of *Sodom*, they laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his Wife and Children, as they lingred and plaid loath to depart, and even pulled them out from that burning that was coming. Do your hearts hang back from Chriſt, do they ſtill hang after your ſinful ways? Lay hold on them, pull them along, *Mat.* 11. 12. *The Kingdom of Heaven ſuffereth Violence, and the Violent take it by force.* That notes that People are in good earneſt for Heaven, and cry mightily to God, wreſtle with the moſt High for admiſſion. This ſpeaks a kind of uſing Violence with God; but the firſt Violence Men are to uſe, is upon themſelves: They muſt firſt lay violent hands on their own hearts to bring them about towards God; and this muſt be done by preſſing the things which they hear on, upon their hearts, rouzing up their fear, and ſetting that as a Dogg upon their heels, to hunt them away from their ſins, and drive them on to Chriſt. This fear will be to Sinners as the Avenger of blood to the Man-ſlayer, 'twill hunt them on their way, and haſten them to Chriſt. O my Soul, art thou not afraid to continue as thou art? to continue a Drunkard, to continue a Worldling, or a Lyar, or a Sleeper in thy courſe of Sin? Art thou not afraid of the Devil, art thou not afraid of Death, doth not Hell make thee tremble? Art thou afraid what may come upon thee, and yet wilt thou not ſtir? Is the Avenger of Blood at thine heels, and yet wilt thou not run for't? Thus ſhould Sinners fright themſelves to Chriſt: If goodneſs, and kindneſs, and mercy will not allure you, let your miſery, and the danger you are in, ſcare you; put your finger into the fire, *dwell* in the conſidering that

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VVrath and fiery Indignation which you are falling into; a ſudden tranſient thought now and then will do little; you muſt think and think over again and again of theſe terrible things. And to make ſuch thoughts to work, put the caſe to your ſelves, *What if theſe dreadful things ſhould come upon me?* What if I (ſhould) fall into that fire? There is danger it may be my caſe, and what if it ſhould be ſo? If I ſhould feel the ſcalding and ſcorching of thoſe flames, O how ſhould *I* endure? How ſhould *I* do to Burn, and to dwell in everlaſting Burnings? Think over ſuch thoughts, Sinners, and give not over till you feel theſe very thoughts begin to ſcald and ſcorch you; and then force and fright your ſelves on to Repent, with ſuch farther queſtions, VVhat, is turning from ſin, and the pains of ſeeking after Chriſt, is this more painful than everlaſting Death? VVhat, wilt thou do nothing to ſave thy Life? to keep thee out of the fire? Suppoſe thy houſe were falling on fire, how would it ſtartle thee? How buſie wouldſt thou be to prevent or quench it? How paſſionately wouldſt thou cry out, Fire, Fire? How wouldſt thou run, and call, and ſend for all the help thou could'ſt get, to ſave thy Houſe out of Aſhes? And is not thy ſoul more to thee than thy Houſe? Will not the Wrath of God burn more fiercely than the fire of thine Houſe? Nay further, Suppoſe thine Houſe were on fire, and thou wert lock'd in, and couldſt not get out, but wert like to burn with thy Goods; O how would'ſt thou cry out to thy Friends without, O Pitty, Pitty me, and help me out, pull down the Windows, break open the Door and help me out; I Burn, I Burn, break open the Door that *I* may get out.

Sinners, if you would be perſwaded to dwell on ſuch thoughts as theſe, O they would fright you out

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of this sleepy and secure state, they would fright you out of your Excuses; now you put it off, its hard to Repent, its hard to change mine heart and my way; your pinching necessity would make you break through difficulties; or at least you would call to your Friends, to your Minister, Break open the door upon me; can you do nothing to break this hard heart of mine? Can you say nothing to awaken this sleepy heart of mine? O help me, help me out of this hardned state.

But what is it we must force our selves to? Why to Christ or Christianity, to Religion or Godliness.

Obj. But God loves not, nor will regard a forc'd Religion, He will have his Followers to follow him *freely*, and not by constraint or force.

Sol. There is a forceing our selves to *the entrance* upon Religion, and there is a forceing our selves on in *the exercise* of Religion; 'tis most ordinary that Men are at first forced upon Religion by their fear; that ordinarily is their first motive to look after Christ, what shall I be Damned? Shall I stand slighting of Christ and following my sins till I dye? O *I* must come about, I am afraid to continue as I am, O my soul, escape for thy life, and get thee to Christ. But those that thus force themselves in, do afterwards go more freely on. Not but that there is still need of some forceing of our selves; there is still some use of fear, to hold us close to the exercise of Religion, and the following of Christ: But though there be use of fear still, yet then 'tis Love that chiefly leads us on; and the longer, and the further we have followed Christ, the more freely we shall follow him.

2. *There is a stirring up our selves* [*in*] *Religion*, or to the vigorous exercise of Religion: This concerns the Saints or Professors of Christianity. Sinners have

no Religion in them, and their work is to ſtir up themſelves [to] Religion, to get that which they have not: Chriſtians have gotten to ſome Religion, and their work is to ſtir up themſelves in Religion, to a progreſs or going forwards in Religion.

Amongſt the Saints, ſome have *more Religion* in them, do abound in the Grace of God, and in the work of Grace: Others of them *have ſomething, but 'tis but little* of Religion they have; they are but of little Faith, *Mat.* 6. 30. have but little ſtrength. Some good thing is found in them towards the God of *Iſrael*, but yet it is but a day of ſmall things. Of theſe that have but little, ſome *never had much*: We read of Babes in Chriſt, 1 *Pet.* 3. 1. of Children in underſtanding; and of theſe, ſome are but new born Babes, beginners in Religion; others, who though as *Heb.* 5. 12. for their time they might have been grown up to be Men, to be ſtrong in the Lord; yet after a long time of profeſſion of Chriſtianity, they have not had one Cubit added to their Stature in the grace of God. Though they have been Chriſtians of long ſtanding, yet their ſouls are as *Zacheus* his body, of little Stature. Of thoſe that have but little Grace, ſome never had more, it hath been ever but low with them from the beginning. Others *once had more Grace, but they are fallen*, and ſunk in their Eſtates; like *Naomi*, time was when they went out full, but they are returned empty. They have waſted their Talents, and are conſumed in their ſtrength; their light burns dim, their flaming Lamp is become but like ſmoaking Flax, they have little more than the ſnuff of Religion left them.

Now there's need of ſtirring up themſelves in Religion in all theſe ſorts. Thoſe that have the moſt of Grace, had need beſtir themſelves to get more: thoſe that (live) moſt in the diligent exerciſe of Grace,

Grace, that live moſt ſpiritually, moſt circumſpectly, had need be giving more diligence daily; you that are higheſt, you are not yet come to your full growth, there is ſtill more to be gotten, and more to be done for God and your ſouls.

But this duty of ſtirring up our ſelves in Religion, moſt eſpecially concerns thoſe that have but little Religion in them; both ſuch as never had but little, and ſuch as once had more, and now are fallen to decay.

Now to ſhew you what this ſtirring up our ſelves in Religion means, underſtand

1. *By what acts you muſt ſtir up your ſelves.*

2. *To what pitch of Religion you ſhould ſtrive to attain.*

1. *By what acts you muſt ſtir up your ſelves.*

1. *The Saints muſt begin the ſtirring up themſelves in Religion, where Sinners muſt begin their ſtirring up themſelves to Religion in bethinking themſelves,* Hag. 1. 5. *Now therefore conſider your ways,* or ſet your heart upon your ways; ſee how 'tis with you, take diligent notice how it goes with your ſouls. Friends, it may be, there's the ſame reaſon for you upon a ſpiritual account, as there was for them upon an outward account to conſider your ways: VVhy ſhould they conſider their ways? why, *v.6. Becauſe ye have Sowne much, and Reap but little; ye eat, but have not enough; ye Drink, but are not filled; ye Cloath you, but there is none warm; ye earn Wages to put into a Bag with holes.* May be, upon a Spiritual account, it may be ſaid much to the ſame purpoſe concerning ſome of you; God hath been Sowing much, but hath Reaped but little; He hath been Feeding and Cloathing you, but you are empty ſtill, and naked ſtill; all that you have receiv'd from God, doth not keep you warm; what-ever Treaſures have been poured out

upon you, your hearts have been as bags with holes, the Treaſure of the Lord runs out as faſt as 'tis poured in; you are leaking Veſſels, nothing will ſtay with you: Therefore conſider your ſelves, conſider whether it hath not been thus with you: O how have the Inſtructions of God, His Counſels and his Comforts ſlid away, how quickly are they let ſlip? VVhat becomes of all your Sermons, and Sabbaths, and Sacraments you have had? VVe have brought you many a rich Treaſure; we have been pouring into thoſe hearts of yours, ſuch living Food, ſuch rich VVine and Oyle that might have made you fat and flouriſhing; but what's become of it all? O it ſtill finds an hole in your hearts, at which it runs out as faſt as 'tis poured in. Conſider Friends, if it be not ſo with many of you, when you have been inſtructed and affected with your inſtructions, when you have been fed and revived, and refreſhed with your Food, how ſoon after is it all run out and loſt? Sure Friends, it's grievous to the Miniſters of Chriſt, and a diſcouragement to us in our Adminiſtrations, to ſee how little a while what we bring you from God, abides upon your hearts; the Lord hath Sowne much upon you, but how little is there he Reaps? In ſome of you there's little ſprings up, and thoſe in whom there's more ſprings up, and flouriſhes for a time in the blade, O how hath it withered and grown to deday, and will not ripen to the Harveſt!

That it may be better for the future, your firſt buſineſs is to conſider and bethink your ſelves, if hitherto it be not thus with you: Bethink your ſelves every one of you, *How is it with me?* Is mine heart kept full? full of the Knwledge of God, full of Faith, and the fruits of it? Is mine heart kept warm? Is there ſuch an heat wrought into it as holds? Is mine heart a Treaſure of good things, and do they abide in me?

Do the counſels of the VVord, and the comforts and quicknings of Sacraments ſtay by me? Have I ſome ſtanding abiding Treaſure within me, ſomething within me to ſhew that the VVord is not Preached to me in vain? Or do not *I* do as others, let all ſlip and dye away with the ſpeaking? Bethink your ſelves thus, how 'tis with you; is your Grace grown up? Are your ſouls built up in Faith and Holineſs? God hath been building among you, but how doth the building go up? In ſome of you, hath it not ever been at a ſtand? If the Foundation hath been laid, yet ſcarce a ſtone laid up upon it; and others in whom the Building ſeemed to be rais'd to ſome conſiderable height, is it not broken down, is not your work fallen again? Deal plainly in this matter, bethink your ſelves, do your ſouls proſper, or is it but low with you, and hath it not been ſome time better with ſome of you than 'tis now?

2. If it be but low with your ſouls, much more if you have had a long time to increaſe, ſince you firſt believed; and more then that, if heretofore it hath been better with you then 'tis now, then bethink your ſelves further, Is not this an evil caſe you are in? Is this a caſe to be reſted in? Do you like it to be as you are? If you had a Child of your natural body, that ſhould be no more able to ſpeak, or go, or feed its ſelf, and had no more underſtanding at 10. or 20. years old then when 'twas but an Infant, but muſt be ſtill Suckled and carryed in Armes at thoſe years, as if it had been but in its firſt year; would not ſuch a Child be a Croſs to you, and an Affliction? O how is it that you are not a Croſs to your ſelves, and an Affliction to your ſelves, that after ſo long a time as ſome of you have had of growing, you ſhould yet in matters ſpiritual not be paſt Babes or Children? It was an Affliction to the Apoſtle, 1 *Cor.* 3. 1. that

he muſt ſtill ſpeak to them as to Babes *I could not ſpeak unto you as to Spiritual, but as unto Carnal, even as unto Babes in Chriſt.* Here 2 things, 1. To have Chriſtians to continue ſtill as Babes and Children, is an Affliction to their Miniſters. The manner of the Apoſtles ſpeech intimates ſo much, that it was a trouble to him that he muſt ſtill ſpeak to them as Babes. 2. By how much the more carnal Chriſtians remain, by how much the leſs ſpiritual, by ſo much the more Childiſh they continue, to be ſtill carnal, is there ſaid to be the ſame with being Babes. Doſt thou think that thou art grown paſt a Child? How is it that thou art ſo carnal ſtill, minding carnal things, and living ſuch a carnal life? Carnally minded Profeſſors, thoſe that are given ſo much to their carnal things, and are of ſuch a carnal Converſation, if they have any thing of Chriſt in them, yet 'tis but very little; if they be Chriſtians, they are but Babes in Chriſt; as they grow up, they will grow more Spiritual and Heavenly. Never think your ſelves to be grown or thriving Chriſtians, till ye can more deſpiſe theſe carnal things and ways, and are come to be more Spiritually-minded, and have gotten this Earth and Fleſh more out of your hearts, and under you feet.

VVell, but is it not an Affliction to you to continue thus carnal? Are you well ſatisfied with that carnal heart you have, with that carnal life you live? But what do you think of [your] ſtate, that have grown up from being Carnal to be Spiritual, and are now fallen from being Spiritual to be Carnal again? Have you once had the day-light ſhining in your hearts, and are you now returned to the twi-light again? Did you once live a life of Faith, and a life of Love, and had your Converſation in Heaven? were you once of a tender heart, of a circumſpect ſavoury Life? Did you live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit,

Spirit, and are you now fallen back to a more eager minding earthly things, and have loſt that ſenſe, that lively ſenſe you had of things Spiritual and Eternal? Bethink your ſelves Friends, whither this be any of your caſes, and whether you like it to be in ſuch a caſe? Or whether you do not with grief acknowledg it, my ſoul is but in evil caſe, and it's time for me to beſtir my ſelf, and get me up to a better ſtate?

2. *In crying out upon your ſelves,* to be reaching forward to what you have not attained, and to recover what you have loſt, as the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 57. 8. *Awake up my glory*; ſo ſay you, awake up my Grace, awake up my Love, awake my Fear, awake up my Conſcience: And as the Apoſtle to the *Romans*, chap. 13. 11. Awake O my ſoul, *'tis high time to awaken out of ſleep*; 'tis high time to look about me, 'tis high time to beſtir me. What, ſhall I always loyter and trifle as I have done hitherto? Shall I never take more care and more pains, and be more buſie for God and my Soul than I have hitherto been? 'Tis high time, 'tis high time to awaken and put on. I may no longer live the (reſt) of my time in the Fleſh, *The time paſt of my life may ſuffice me to have wrought the will of the Gentiles*; As the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 4. 2, 3. The time paſt may ſuffice me. It is enough, it is long enough that I have liv'd this carnal life? O 'tis more then enough, 'tis too long, 'tis a ſhame that I have lived under the profeſſion of Chriſtianity ſo long as I have, and yet my ſoul be brought to no better paſs: O 'tis time that I awaken and beſtir my ſelf to amend my pace. Cry out thus upon your ſelves, awaken O my ſoul in time, 'tis time, 'tis high time, 'tis more than time to look about thee; come my lazy heart, up, and be doing: And if it be time to get more Grace than ever I had, ſure 'tis high time to ſet to recovering what once I had and

have now loſt: Is my ſoul at a loſs, and ſhall *I* always ſit down by the loſs? Much *I* have loſt already, and ſhall *I* go on loſing and loſing, till *I* have loſt all? Friends, we cry unto you, remember whence you have fallen, and Repent, recover your firſt love, do your firſt works; and when you will take the cry from our mouths, and cry thus upon your ſelves, then there's hopes ye will recover.

3. *In crying unto the Lord for his help.* If Miniſters cannot ſtir you, if Conſcience cannot ſtir you, if ye cannot awaken your ſelves, nor recover your ſelves, yet the Lord God can do it, the helper of *Iſrael* can help you. *Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is nigh,* Iſa. 55. 6. Before you be too far gone, before your caſe grow deſperate, whilſt the Lord is at hand, calling upon you, now ſeek out to him. Go to the Phyſitian of ſouls, He can cure every Diſeaſe, and thy Diſeaſe, the Conſumption of the heart. Behold, thou art in a Conſumption, not of the Liver, or Lungs, or Reins, the Conſumption of the Heart is upon thee; and this Conſumption no other Phyſitian can cure but the Phyſitian of Souls: What-ever other Phyſitian thou goeſt to, with the neglect of him, thou wilt find them all Phyſitians of no value; what-ever other courſe thou takeſt, with the neglect of ſeeking God, he will ſay to thee, as *Jer.* 46. 11. *In vain ſhalt thou uſe many Medicines, for thou ſhalt not be cured.* Go to God for thy languiſhing ſoul, cry unto Him, lift up thine heart with thy might, pour forth thy very ſoul in thy Prayers; Lord *I* am fallen, Lord *I* pine, my ſoul languiſheth, my Faith faileth, my Beauty is withered, my Spirit is waſted, my Fleſh and my Heart faileth, but thou art the ſtrength of mine heart, and my hope is in thee; help Lord, or *I* dye, *I* dye for ever.

4. *In*

4. *In putting a force upon your ſelves to do your duty.* It is not lying down in the Ditch, and only crying, *God help me*; you muſt do your beſt to help your ſelves, or God will not help you. All the means under Heaven will never do, unleſs we can bring you to ſet your hearts on work for your ſelves; have you any of you taken a fall? Are you down, and would you recover? Count upon it, that it muſt coſt you pains; your hearts hang back, and are loth to come to it; that's your Diſeaſe, your loathneſs to ſpiritual action, and what muſt you do to get your ſelves on? Why, what would you do to your Oxe or your Horſe if they lag or grow lazy? O they muſt feel the Goad and the Spur, and that will quicken them: O Friends, put Spurs to your own ſides, prick your ſelves on to more activity; ſuffer not your ſelves to jogg on in Religion, ſo as you can with eaſe; eaſie Religion will never help you: You that are not for pains-taking, there you muſt lye, and pine, and periſh, and there's no help for you. *Why lyeſt thou thus upon thy face?* Get thee up, ſays God to *Joſhua*, Joſh. 7. 10. Why ſtand you bewailing and bemoaning your ſelves? Up, and be doing, thou haſt ſinned thy ſelf into this caſe, thou haſt idled thy ſelf into this loſs, and nothing will help thee out without thine own diligence and labour. Go tell your own hearts, there's no hope of recovery without induſtry, and if they will not hear on't, chide them out of this liſtleſs temper: What, canſt thou take pains for Bread, or for Money, and no pains for thy ſoul? Canſt thou take pains to pleaſe thy fleſh, and yet will be at no pains to pleaſe God? O what a wicked, wretched, fooliſh heart have *I*? Any labour will down but this neceſſary labour: Well, thou ſhalt not 'ſcape me ſo, thou art no heart for me, if thou art not an heart for work; never ſtand excuſing or delaying, thou muſt

come

come to it; fall to thy duty and follow it close, or thou wilt dye the Death. In this manner force your selves on, let not your hearts be quiet within you, till you have engaged in a more active and laborious Life. Thus *I* have shewed you by what acts you are to stir up your selves.

2. *To what pitch in Religion we should stir up our selves.*

To this *I* shall Answer.

1. *In General.* 'Tis not to amend a little, to get into something a better case than you are, but to come on to purpose, to come on fully after the Lord. May be, some of you may think, if this word should have (some) effect upon you, and make you a little better, that it had done its work upon you; no, no, you are far short of what you should be; and think not that this word hath done its work, though it should make you a little better than you are, unless it also bring you effectually onward towards what you should be. There's no mark *short of perfection*, that should bound or terminate your aims: But *I* shall give you three marks on this side the Goal, the better to direct your eye towards it.

1. *To such a pitch as is proportionable to your time.* You are some of you, Professors of long standing, and yet are come to but little. O labour that your growth may be according to the time you have.

2. *Those that are fallen, should strive to get up to that pitch, to which once they had attained.* This is the first thing we should have in our eye, to recover what we have lost, to recover our first love, to do our first works which the Church of *Ephesus* was exhorted to, *Rev.* 2. 5. That which hath been attained, may be attained, and must be striven after. You that are fallen, remember how it hath been with you in your best time; remember the kindness of your youth,

and

and the love of your *Eſpouſals*, when your hearts were tender, when your love was keen, when your affections were quick and lively, when the VVord and Ordinances of God were ſweet and powerful, when you came from far, and would go through thick and thin to hear the word of the Lord; when your Meditations, when your Communications by the way, as you went and returned, were ſo ſavoury and ſo pleaſant to you: Such a time there has been with ſome of you, ſuch a time of love and of life there has been, are you fallen from this? O recover, recover, and let it be with you as in the days of old.

3. *Both thoſe that are fallen, and every one, ſhould ſtrive to get up to the higheſt pitch of Religion, that is attainable.* You ſhould level at perfection of Holineſs, and no mark ſhort of Perfection ſhould limit or bound your aims, 2 *Cor.* 7. 1. *Having theſe promiſes, let us cleanſe our ſelves from (all) filthineſs of Fleſh and Spirit, perfecting Holineſs in the fear of God.* Though perfect Holineſs cannot be attained, yet it muſt be aimed at; though we cannot reach unto it, yet we muſt be reaching towards it; though we cannot obtain, yet we muſt be ſtill following after. Becauſe we cannot obtain all that is deſirable, but there will be ſtill while we live, ſomething that is before, which we are yet ſhort of; therefore our motion in Religion muſt be conſtantly a progreſſive motion; we muſt ſtill be going forward, and reaching out to that which is before, that our works may be more, and our hearts may be better at laſt then at firſt, *Prov.* 4. 18. The Path of the Juſt muſt ſhine more and more unto perfect day, Grace muſt be growing up till it be ſwallowed up of Glory.

2. *Particularly.*

1. *To an hunger and thirſt of ſoul after more of Religion*; to a ſtirring Appetite. Sick men, when their Stomacks

Stomacks come to them, 'tis a good ſign of recovery. Hunger and Thirſt are *eager Appetites*, that put us to pain, and are impatient till ſatisfied; the keenneſs, or eagerneſs of the Appetite after the Grace of God, is expreſs'd by Coveteouſneſs, earneſt Coveteouſneſs, 1 *Cor.* 12. 31. *Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts*: The Coveteous are greedy ſouls; but there are degrees of greedineſs, the hearts of ſome Covetous ones are more ſharp ſet upon the world than others that are greedy enough. Covet earneſtly, let your hearts be as hungry and thirſty after Grace, and the gifts of Grace, as the moſt greedy Men on earth gapes after the world.

Hunger and Thirſt are *imperious Appetites*, that will command men upon any thing, any labour, any difficulties, for the obtaining ſatisfaction; Hunger will break through Stone walls: A graciouſly thirſty ſoul will not ſit ſtill, and only ſay, *I Thirſt, give me to drink*; but he will riſe and about, to ſeek where he may be ſatisfied; he will out to the Springs and the Brooks, and the Wells of Salvation, where he may draw and drink of the VVater of Life. He will refuſe no pains nor no hazard, in order to the ſatisfying his deſire. Then you are hungry after Religion, then your ſouls are Athirſt for God, when you are ſo ſharply ſet, that you muſt have it, and will ſtick at no labour and difficulties for the obtaining.

The hunger and thirſt of Souls after God, is an attainment which is the way to an higher attainment, *Mat.* 5. 6. *Bleſſed are they that hunger after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled:* Are you hungry after Grace? Are you thirſty after God and Godlineſs? Bleſſed are you, for ye ſhall be filled, ye ſhall have enough; Grace enough for you, Religion and Righteouſneſs enough, your ſouls ſhall be ſatisfied with the goodneſs of the Lord, *He will fulfil the Deſires*

of

of them that fear him, Pſal. 145. 19. O Chriſtians, were we a more hungry Congregation, were we a more thirſty People, Spiritually hungry, Spiritually thirſty, what an Holy People, what a company of gracious ſouls ſhould we quickly become? The Lord will fill his hungry ſouls with his good things; we ſhould be full, and abound, and have all things, even all Grace abundantly towards us, and in us.

'Tis one miſery of conſuming decayed ſouls, that they have loſt their Appetites: Some Conſumptive bodys will be hungry and eat till they dye, but Conſumptive ſouls do neither hunger nor thirſt. 'Tis an ill ſign that thou art dangerouſly gone in a Conſumption, who haſt loſt thine Appetite after God, in whom thy deſire fails; 'tis one of the Death-Tokens mentioned by *Solomon*, Eccleſ. 12. 5. *That deſire ſhall fail.* Thou haſt loſt much of thy ſtrength and thy ſpirits, the life of Grace is fallen much to decay in thee; but doth thy deſire after Grace fail to? Haſt thou loſt thine hunger and thy thurſt after Righteouſneſs, doth thy ſoul ceaſe to pant after the Water-brooks? Canſt thou not ſay I am athirſt for God, for the living God? That ſoul of thine is nigh unto death, if it be not ſuddenly recovered.

O Friends, how many ſuch dying ſouls are there among us? Grace hath failed, and deſire hath failed in too many among us: Do not deceive your ſelves with ſaying, I deſire, *I* deſire to be a more Holy and Heavenly & hearty Chriſtian; do not ſay you deſire, nor think you deſire what you do not. *Appetitus determinator ad hoc.* If you truly deſire Grace & an improvement herein, then this is *the one thing* you deſire; Grace, and nothing but Grace; Holineſs, and nothing but Holineſs will ſatisfie. And if you can ſay, this one thing I deſire, then you will alſo ſay, this one thing I will ſeek. 'Tis not a dull and idle, and in-

effectual

ineffectual wiſh that can be accounted a ſincere deſire, but ſuch a keen and eager Appetite and Thirſt after God as will not let you be quiet, or ſuffer you to reſt in ſuch a caſe. Thoſe that are heartily hungry, they can't ſleep for hunger, their hunger will keep them waking. What, are you ſuch drowſie, ſleepy ſouls? Can you take any reſt in that poor and empty ſtate you are in? Sure, what-ever you think, you have little thirſt for God, 'twould keep you waking (if you had); your ſouls would have no eaſe, you could not be in quiet till you obtain.

O what a caſe is this that thou art in? What, to have ſo little of God in thee, and yet no greater deſire after more? What art thou like to come to, whoſe Bread fails, and when hunger fails to; whoſe Grace is ſunk, and whoſe deſire after Grace fails? What, neither to have, nor to wiſh thou had'ſt? or to have ſo very little, next to nothing, and not to wiſh for more? What, to have loſt ſo much, and not to weep over thy loſs, and wiſh for thy recovery? Friends, how ſtands the caſe with you? Sure you do not know your ſtate; if ſome of you do, know that it's but very low with you: But what pantings, or thirſtings, or workings of your hearts are there after an increaſe? Do not ſome of you find a great indifferency grown upon you in this matter? You are not careful, nor much concern'd about the reviving of your ſouls? If you have any good deſires at all, are they not weak deſires, dull and cold deſires, ſuch as do not at all ſtir or diſquiet your ſpirits, but that you can go on well enough for all this, in your worldly deſignes and fleſhly ways? When do ye think to recover into a better caſe? Are ye ever like to come to any thing in Religion, may you not fear you are quickly like to come to juſt nothing, if ye hold on a while longer at this paſs? O Friends, feel your

Pulſes

Pulſes every one, (how) do your hearts beat Heaven-wards? How very faintly do they beat? What might *I* do to make you ſenſible what fainty ſouls you are? What might *I* ſpeak to ſtir up deſire to whet your Appetites? If *I* could but Preach you into hungry ones, and thirſty ones; if I might ſend you away from this Soul-meal with an Appetite, then there would be hope that the Lord would fill you with his good things.

Well, this is the firſt thing *I* would perſwade you to, *to ſtir up your Appetites*; Get you ſuch an hunger and thirſt of ſoul after the Lord, and the power of Religion: Let your loſs make you hungry after a recovery; let your want make you hungry after a ſupply: Let the worth and excellency of Religion, and the power of Holineſs, ſet you an hungring after it, as ſometimes the very ſight of good Meat does in our bodily caſes. What do ye mean? Will ye Starve and Periſh, and Pine away to nothing? What will ye dye away of this conſuming Diſeaſe? Have you loſt ſo much, and will you loſe that little that's left? Are you not yet afraid that you may? That you that have loſt ſo much, may even loſe all? Does it never move you? Does it never trouble you to ſee what Starveling, Pale-faced Chriſtians ſome of you are become? Sure Friends, if you would conſider your ſelves, if you would lay to heart your weak, and waſted, and wanting ſtate, this would kindle deſire after a recovery and revival. And if we could but kindle deſire in you, affectionate deſires, ardent deſires, impatient, painful, working deſires, this would be a good ſtep towards that pitch of proſperous Religion that *I* am propoſing to you to follow after. And therefore pray never be at peace with your ſelves, nor ſuffer your hearts to have quiet, till this miſerable liſtleſneſs and coldneſs towards God

be

be cured, and you be ſo awakened out of this dulneſs that you may be able to ſay with the Church, *Iſa.* 26. 8, 9. *I wait for thee O Lord, the deſire of my ſoul is to thy Name, and to the remembrance of thee; with my very ſoul do I deſire thee in the night, and my ſpirit within me ſhall ſeek thee early:* And with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 63 1, 2, 3. *O God thou art my God, early will I ſeek thee: I* have neglected thee, *I* have forſaken thee, but now my ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee in this dry and thirſty ſtate, where no water is. O that *I* might ſee thy power and thy glory, ſo as *I* have ſeen it, or as others thy Saints do ſee it? Thy loving kindneſs is better than life, my ſoul followeth hard after thee, let thy right hand help me: Let your ſouls thus cry out after the living God, Lord help me; help me up to thee, help me on after thee, revive thy work in me, *I* have gone aſtray like a loſt Sheep; ſeek the ſoul of thy Servant, that *I* may never again forget thy Commandments. Let me be found in thy Statutes, and let my ways be ſo directed, that *I* may keep thy Precepts. O Friends, might you be brought to ſuch a thirſting, longing, deſiring, ſeeking heart, then ſhall your ſouls be filled with marrow and fatneſs, and your mouth ſhall praiſe him with joyful lips.

2. *To a ſavour and reliſh of Religion.* Some are ſo ſick and weak that they cannot eat nor drink what's good for them, have quite loſt their Appetites; others can eat and drink, but cannot reliſh what they take, have loſt their taſt. VVhen both their Appetite is reſtored and their taſt; when they can eat that which is good, and can reliſh what they eat, that's a farther token of recovery. *When wiſdom entereth into the heart, and the knowledge of God is* [*pleaſant*] *to the ſoul,* as *Prov.* 2. 10. When we receive the

the knowledge of God, and perceive the ſweet ſavour of his knowledge, this is an argument of ſoundneſs and healthfulneſs. Sickly and weakly ſouls, their neceſſity will make them drink in ſomething of the things of God: Religion and Godlineſs they muſt entertain and embrace, they ſee they muſt dye elſe, as a Sick man ſees he muſt if he do not eat nor drink: And therefore how unpleaſant ſoever it be, it muſt down; but were it not for neceſſity, he could be better contented to let it all alone.

Chriſtians, it may be your Soul-neceſſities do put you upon ſomething of Religion, hold you to Praying, and to Hearing, and to minding and ſpeaking of the things of God; 'tis well that ſomething will do with you, that your neceſſity will prevail with you, better ſo than not at all; but yet it may be, whatever you receive, whatever you do, you can find no ſavour in it, you have no taſt of the ſweetneſs of Religion, it goes down like chips & ſticks, and hath no reliſh in it. You can Pray, but you have no lively affections in prayer; you can hear, & yet find no ſweetneſs in what you hear; you can ſpeak, and maintain diſcourſe about the things of God, but are not at all affected with what you ſpeak; it comes coldly and drily out, and hath no gratefulneſs in it, neither to your ſelves or thoſe that hear you; ſure this is a ſign that you have but little Religion in you, if any at all. When what we receive of Religion, goes deep, enters into the heart; when that which we bring forth of Religion (comes) deep, comes from the heart: VVhen we ſpeak with the heart, it will be more affectionate, and the affection which we expreſs will be an evidence that we taſt the good things we ſpeak of.

O Friends, get you ſuch a reliſh of Religion, get you up not only to be knowing and underſtanding Chriſtians, but ſavoury Chriſtians, of a ſavoury

ſpirit, *Rom.* 8. 5. *Thoſe that are after the Spirit do mind* (the word ſignifies) *do ſavour the things of the Spirit:* Spiritual things are ſavoury things to Spiritual men. Get you to be ſo Spiritually minded, that you may be ſpiritually affected; that the knowledge of God, and the thoughts of God, and the worſhip of God, that communing with God and with your own hearts, and one with another, about the things of God, may be affecting and pleaſant to your ſouls. Lively affectionate Chriſtians, 'tis a ſign they have drunk in the Spirit of Religion into their very hearts; and it will be an help to the begetting and warming affections in others; when once you have experimentally taſted the ſweetneſs, and are thereby deeply affected with Religion, then you are like to hold to it, and proſper in it. This taſt and reliſh of Religion is not to be gotten but by our inward and experimental acquaintance with it, whilſt it dwells but in the head and upon the tongue, it will be but a dry and inſipid thing to you; whilſt you dwell upon the ſurface, and out-ſide, and are but ſmatterers and triflers in Religion, you may ſay of all your Religion, as it was ſaid of *Samaria*'s Idolatry, *Hoſ.* 8. 7. *It hath no Stalk, the Bud yields no Meal*; or if it hath any ſtalk, or ſeems to yield any meal, yet neither ſtalk nor meal hath any ſweetneſs *in it*. Friends, you muſt go deeper in Religion if ever you will taſt the ſweetneſs of it. Get your hearts to be ſo leavened and ſeaſoned with it, get Religion to be ſo Naturalized to you, drink in the ſpirit of Religion into you, that you may be metamorphiſed and changed into its own Image and Nature, and then you will find how pleaſant it will be to you.

3. *To ſolidity in Religion.* Particularly,

1. *To ſolid ſubſtantial Religion.*

2. *To be more ſolid in Religion.*

1. *Get*

1. *Get up to ſolid and ſubſtantial Religion.* VVhat the ſubſtance of Religion is, I ſhall ſhortly hint to you from two Scriptures, *Phil.* 3. 3. *We are the Circumciſion which Worſhip God in the Spirit, and rejoyce in Chriſt Jeſus, and have no confidence in the fleſh:* Tit. 2. 12. *Teaching us, that denying all ungodlineſs and wordly Luſts, we ſhould live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly in this preſent world.* Out of theſe two Scriptures you may learn wherein the ſubſtance of Religion lyes, *viz.*

1. *In worſhipping God in the Spirit*; or as *Joh.* 4. 24. *in Spirit and in Truth.* This Notes, 1. The inward worſhipping God, our loving, fearing, praiſing the Lord, *&c.* 2. Our being real and ſpiritual in the outward worſhip of God, our hearing with underſtanding, our praying with our Spirits, *&c.* Our taking heed to it, that our acts of worſhip be not barely bodily exerciſe, but the works of our ſouls; be not ſhaddows and Images of worſhip, but the very thing they pretend to be.

2. *In rejoyceing in Chriſt Jeſus*: That is, as our Mediator, by whom, as we exhibit all our worſhip, ſo we expect its acceptance, and all the comforts and fruits of it.

3. *In ſhunning of Iniquity*, Denying all ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts. This Notes, 1. The abſtaining from the practiſe of ſin, that we *do no Iniity*, Pſal. 119. 3. 2. The mortifying the Luſts of ſin, the killing of ſin within, the Crucifying the fleſh, with the affections and Luſts, *Gal.* 5. 24.

4. *In the practiſe of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs.* Our living Soberly, and Righteouſly, and Godly in this preſent world. Theſe are the ſubſtance of Religion; he that worſhips God in Spirit and in Truth, that thus rejoyces in Chriſt Jeſus, that denying all Ungodlineſs and wordly Luſts, lives Righteouſly,

and Soberly, and Godly in this present world, he is a substantial Christian.

There may be great growth in these substantials, in this solid Religion, where there seems but little in affection; & there may be much affection in others that are not solid Christians: there may be Christians that can't weep for sin, as some others can, but yet they can take more heed of sin; they can fear it, and shun it, and conquer the power of it more than those that can more passionately weep for it. There are some that cannot so passionately melt under the VVord, but yet the VVord sticks more upon them, and hath more power over their practise. There are, that can't feel so much of the warm and lively workings of love to God, but they are more tender how they offend or displease God; more bent upon being Serviceable and Faithful to God: And sure there's more of solid Religion in these, than in some others in whom it works more passionately. Friends, look to this, if you be wanting in affection, let it be made up in circumspection; what you want of the delights of Religion, let it be made up in diligence. If you feel not so much of the warm workings of love to Christ, yet can you but keep you close to Christ, and the obedience of his will; if whilst you are less lively, you be yet more tender, and heedful, and watchful in your goings; if whilst you can't melt, nor passionately mourn for sin, yet you carefully shun and beware of sin; if though you be not elevated and raised to those heights and raptures of joys, as some others, yet you are more mortified to sin & the world; if you be dead with Christ, dead to the Fashions, and Lusts, and Pleasures, and Riches of this world; if ye be dead with Christ, though your life and the comforts of it be yet but hidden, you have gotten the substance of Christianity in you. In these, and such like instances,

ſtances, ſtands the ſolidity of Chriſtianity, wherein he that groweth moſt is the beſt Chriſtian. It's true, when affection and ſolidity go together, where we are both ſubſtantial Chriſtians, and alſo warm and liveſly Chriſtians, that's incomparably beſt and moſt deſireable. Follow after both, but eſpecially take heed that what-ever be wanting in affection, be made up in ſolidity. Get to be more underſtanding experienced Chriſtians, get to be more Conſcientious, tender, ſtrict, and cloſe followers of Chriſt in all the known and weighty matters of the Law. Be mortified to ſin, be crucified to the World, be bent upon doing all the good you can in your Generations; this is it I mean by ſolid Religion.

O Friends, what a deal of light and frothy Religion have we known ſome years ſince in our Land, which made a great noiſe, and a fair ſhew, and appear'd in a great fluſh of affection, and had but little it? What tryumphing in Chriſt, what boaſting of the Spirit, what magnifyings of free grace, what pretentions to great joyes and confidences were there amongſt many hot and haſty Profeſſors which have ſince vaniſhed into meer wind? How comes this to paſs? Why there was not the ſubſtance of Religion at bottom; the ſounding Veſſels were hollow, and had nothing in them. Be as affectionate as you can, be as zealous and lively as poſſible, but be ſure that there be ſubſtance under all your ſhews. Be diligent Chriſtians, be doing Chriſtians, be mortified Chriſtians; 'tis this which will hold out, and therefore let this be it you are reaching up unto, to keep you from Iniquity, to keep you cloſe to duty, and hence to be built up through Faith unto Salvation.

2. *Get to be ſolid in Religion*, to more firmneſs, to be more [deeply] rooted in the Faith, and more

firmly reſolved for the obedience of the Goſpel; this the Apoſtle expreſſes by *groundedneſs and ſettleneſs*, Col. 1. 23. *If ye continue in the Faith, grounded and ſetled*; and Chap. 2. 7. *rooted and built up in him, and eſtabliſhed in the Faith.* In this eſtabliſhment or rootedneſs (beſides a firm belief of the Goſpel) are theſe 4. things.

1. *A firm reſolution for Chriſt.*
2. *A firm truſt in Chriſt.*
3. *A firm adherence to Chriſt.*
4. *A confirmed habit of Holineſs.*

1. *A firm reſolution for Chriſt*, and the obedience of the Goſpel; every ſincere reſolution is a firm reſolution, but there are degrees of firmneſs; firmneſs may be taken in oppoſition to

Fickleneſs.
Feebleneſs.

1. *To fickleneſs.* Some Profeſſors are light and unſtable ſouls, they are off and on, ſometimes reſolved, and then unreſolved; ſometimes their faces, ſometimes their backs are upon Chriſt. In this ſenſe, every ſincere reſolution is a firm reſolution. The weakeſt Chriſtian is unalterably reſolved for Chriſt; though he may be ſhaken, yet he never comes to be totally unreſolved.

2. *To feebleneſs*, or weakneſs of reſolution. Some Chriſtians are more ſtrongly reſolved, others are unalterably, but not ſo ſtrongly. Though they do not go back, yet are they under doubts and fears that they ſhall, and it may be ſometimes (in the day of temptation) put it to the queſtion, Shall I go on, or ſhall I give off? Now this is the firm reſolution I would preſs you to be reaching towards, which is oppoſed to feebleneſs and weakneſs. But having written more largely to this elſe-where, *I* ſhall ſay no more of it here.

2. To

2. *To a ſettled truſt in Chriſt.* Now becauſe this will both prove us to be eſtabliſhed Chriſtians, and alſo mightily conduce to our farther eſtabliſhment and growth; *I* ſhall therefore here a little the more inlarge, and ſhall ſhew,

1. *What this truſt is.*

2. *That it both proves us eſtabliſhed Chriſtians, and makes much for our further improvement and eſtabliſhment.*

1. *What this truſt in Chriſt is.* It is expreſſed in Scripture by *committing our ſelves to him,* 2 Tim. 1. 12. *I know whom I have believed, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him,* or truſted him with. This committing our ſelves to Chriſt, notes,

1. *Our laying up our ſelves, and all our hopes and concerns with him,* ſo as to venture our ſelves in his cuſtody, to venture our ſelves upon his faithfulneſs; to caſt all our *burthens* upon him, *Pſal.* 55. 22. *Caſt thy burthen upon the Lord and he ſhall ſuſtain thee.* To caſt all our *care* upon him, 1 *Pet.* 5. 7. to leave it upon Chriſt to take the care of us, to put it into his hands, to look to it that nothing be loſt, and to help us on through our whole courſe to the end. Only here, leſt we be damnably miſtaken, know, that it muſt be *only for his own part* that Chriſt muſt be truſted, for that which he hath undertaken to do for us, for what he hath undertaken to keep for us. 2. It muſt be *only in his own way,* in a way of obedience to Chriſt, in a way of well-doing: As in reſpect to God, ſo in reſpect to Chriſt alſo, we muſt commit the keeping our ſelves to him in well-doing, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. There are ſome things that we are to do, which Chriſt never undertook to do for us; we are to Believe, we are to Repent, this we muſt do our ſelves: Chriſt hath never undertaken to Believe or Repent for us; we muſt believe our ſelves, and

repent our ſelves. There are ſome things that Chriſt never undertook [alone] to keep for us; we muſt keep Faith and a good Conſcience our ſelves; Chriſt hath undertaken to help us to Repent, to help us to keep a good Conſcience, but never undertook to ſave us the labour of repenting, of keeping Faith and a good Conſcience our ſelves. And that which Chriſt hath undertook to keep for us, *to keep our ſouls, to keep us unto Salvation, to preſerve us unto his Heavenly Kingdom*, He will do it only in his own way; whilſt we are walking in Chriſt's way, in the way of Faith and Obedience to his will, in the way of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs we may boldly venture our ſelves in his keeping.

Sinners will truſt Chriſt with their ſouls, will commit the keeping of their ſouls to him, but not in a way of well doing; they truſt him in a way of evil doing; their truſt in Chriſt they make to be their ſecurity in their evil courſe: They truſt in Chriſt to anſwer for their rejecting Chriſt; they truſt in Chriſt to anſwer for their not believing in Chriſt, for their abuſing and ſlighting of Chriſt, for their total and final Impenitence, and hardning themſelves againſt Chriſt; and from this truſt they venture to go on in their ſins, and in the hardneſs and impenitence of their hearts.

Drunkards, how dare you go on in your Drunkenneſs? Worldlings, how dare you go on in your Covetouſneſs? Ye Vain and Carnal, and Careleſs ones, how dare you go on in this carnal Life? How can ye eſcape the Damnation of Hell? O *I truſt in Chriſt for Salvation*; and what follows? Why thereupon, behold how boldly thou ventureſt on in thy neglect of Chriſt, and thy Rebellion againſt him; thou wouldſt not dare to be ſuch a drunken Beaſt, thou wouldſt not dare to go on in thy Lying, or Covete-

ouſneſs

teouſneſs and Carnality, but for thy truſt in Chriſt, to ſave thee at laſt. Thou goeſt on to ſerve thy will, and mind this World, and ſatisfie thy Luſt: and hence thou takeſt heart and encouragement that thou truſteſt in Chriſt.

But Man, wilt thou truſt Chriſt for that he never undertook? Wilt thou truſt Chriſt for that which he never promiſed? Did Chriſt ever promiſe to ſave thy ſoul, whether thou wert a Believer or no Believer? Whether thou comeſt in and be Converted, or ſtandeſt out, and runneſt on thy wicked ways? Turn Sinners, turn to Chriſt, Repent and be Converted from your ſins, or never comfort your ſelves in your truſt in Chriſt. Chriſt hath ſaid He will Damn thee if thou Believe not, if thou Repent not; but he never ſaid he will ſave thee however. Chriſtians, truſt in Chriſt, commit the keeping of their ſouls to him, but 'tis in Chriſt's way, in a way of well doing and obedience to his will; they lay out themſelves and all their powers in the Service of Chriſt, and then lay up their ſouls, and all their hopes in Chriſt and His cuſtody.

2. *Committing to Chriſt, notes our leaning upon Chriſt, and dependance on Him in a quiet and confident expectation of his helping us, and holding us on our way, according to his promiſe.* The grounds whereof are our being ſatisfied concerning His *promiſe, His ſufficiency and fidelity*, Cant. 8.9. *Who is this that cometh up out of the Wilderneſs, leaning on her Beloved?* The weak or weary Traveller, if he hath whereon to lean, if it be but a Staff or a Stile, or a Tree, on which he may lean himſelf, he finds eaſe and reſt. Chriſtians lean and depend on Chriſt, and this gives them courage for their work, and eaſe and reſt in their ſpirits; their truſt in Chriſt, notes ſuch a repoſe of their ſouls, ſuch a dependance on his ſufficiency, on his fi-

delity,

delity, as quiets, and ſuſtains and ſtays their hearts in hope of his help, and in peace and comfort; and ſo 'tis expreſt, *Iſa.* 50. 10. *Let him truſt in the Name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God.* Chriſtians have their doubts and their fears, and their darkneſs, and their tempeſts; even (their) hearts alſo are ſometimes like a troubled Sea; and how ſadly are they toſſed with the Tempeſts: But how do they ſtand under all this? How is it that they are not ſunk and over-whelmed, and utterly loſt in all this? Their truſt is their ſtrength, they ſtay themſelves upon the Lord. *I* am in a poor caſe Lord, hard beſet, hard beſtead, *I* know not what to do, nor what to make of my ſelf, nor how to help my ſelf; only mine Eyes are towards thee, thou art my Rock and my Refuge. *I* have given this ſoul of mine to thee, 'tis thine own, and thereupon *I* have committed it to thy cuſtody. Look thou to it Lord, thou haſt undertaken for me, and that ſhall ſatisfie me, there *I* will lean, *I* will ſtay, *I* will repoſe my fearing wearied ſoul.

2. *This truſt in Chriſt makes much for our improvement and eſtabliſhment in Chriſtianity:* For,

1. *It is our taking hold on Chriſt.* As the Anchor takes hold on the Rock, as the Root takes hold on the Tree, ſo Faith takes hold on Chriſt; and the higher our Believing is grown up into affiance or truſting, the ſtronger is its hold.

2. *It will anſwer to all our doubts and fears, and to all the doubting queſtions that the anxious ſoul will be pulling in for reſolution and ſatisfaction,* which whilſt they remain unreſolved, he is never like to go comfortably or proſperouſly on his way.

There are amongſt Multitudes of others, theſe three great caſes it ſees before it, which it muſt have reſolution in.

1. Saith

1. Saith the ſoul, *I have a Wilderneſs to paſs through; this world is a Wilderneſs, and the time of my Life is my Travelling through this Wilderneſs, wherein I ſhall find much work and hard uſage: who ſhall help me through this Wilderneſs?*

2. *I have a* Jordain *to paſs over, I muſt paſs through the Vale of the ſhaddow of Death; I muſt dye, who ſhall bring me over* Jordain.

3. *I have an Inheritance that lyes beyond the River, on the other ſide Death; who ſhall give me poſſeſſion of mine Inheritance?* Truſt anſwers to all, to all the doubts that ariſe in theſe three caſes.

The firſt caſe is moſt immediately proper to our buſineſs in hand, but I ſhall crave leave to ſpeak a few words alſo to the two latter, which will be, at leaſt of this uſe, to knock in what I ſhall ſpeak upon the former.

1. Caſe. *I have a Wilderneſs to paſs through, the time of my life is a paſſing through the Wilderneſs; who ſhall help me through it?* And here the ſoul will put two particular queſtions.

1. *Who ſhall lead me my way through the Wilderneſs?* Here are many ways, many falſe ways, many croſs ways, and but one that is the right way: How ſhall I hit my may to Heaven, the right way that leads thither-wards? Who will ſhew me, and lead me in this way? Here Truſt anſwers, Chriſt will do it, I lean upon him to be my *Moſes* to lead me in the way that I ſhould go. *Thou wilt guide me with thy Councel,* Pſal. 73. 24. Chriſt hath gone the way before his Saints, and he will ſhew them his ſteps to direct them: Therefore the Apoſtle exhorts, *Heb.* 12. 2. *Run the Race---looking to Jeſus*; as for encouragement, ſo for direction; follow not the foot-ſteps of the Sheep only, but follow the foot-ſteps of the Shepheard, and walk on as he walked before thee.

But

But how ſhall I find the way, or the ſteps wherein Chriſt walked? *Jer.* 10. 23. *It is not in Man that walketh, to direct his ſteps. How can a Man underſtand his own ways*, Prov. 20. 24. There are many hard and intricate caſes, where I may be at a ſtand, and not know which way to take: Their anſwer is, as *Pſal.* 143. 8. *In thee do I truſt, cauſe me to know the way wherein I ſhould walk, for I lift up my ſoul to thee*; and *v.* 10. *Thy Spirit is good, lead me into the Land of Uprightneſs*; *I truſt thou wilt, thou wilt guide me by thy Counſel, and bring me to glory.*

2. Queſtion, *Who ſhall ſupply and ſuſtain me in the Wilderneſs?* This World is a dry and barren Land; I muſt have Bread to ſtrengthen me, I muſt have water to refreſh me, whence ſhall I be ſupplyed? Why I truſt in Chriſt for ſupplyes, He will give me *Manna*, will rain down Bread from Heaven for me; He will be a ſpringing Rock to me, of whoſe ſtreams I ſhall be refreſhed: Such a Rock there was in the Wilderneſs of old; and the Apoſtle tells me, 1 *Cor.* 10. 4. *This Rock was Chriſt.* Chriſtians are ſenſible that their ſtock of Proviſions which they carry with them, will not laſt; that little Grace they have, thoſe little Comforts they have, will be quickly ſpent and waſted if there be not continually freſh ſupplyes: Whence ſhall I be ſupplyed? Truſt anſwers as the Apoſtle in another caſe, *Phil.* 4. 19. *My God will ſupply all my wants, according to the Riches of his Grace by Chriſt Jeſus.* I truſt he will. I am often as a dry Tree, my ſoul within me is as a barren Wilderneſs; I have every day my work coming upon me, work for mine own Soul, work for my Family, work for my Friends and Enemies. I have every day my wants coming upon me, I want Faith, I want Love, I want Life, and Zeal, and Strength; O how poor and low is it with me! my Soul hungreth and

thirſt,

thirſteth, and fainteth within me, and now what ſhall I do? I will get me to the Rock, and there will I truſt. I will truſt in Chriſt, his Grace ſhall be ſufficient for me, 2 *Cor.* 12. 9. of his fulneſs I hope to receive, even Grace for Grace.

Chriſtians, is this at any time the caſe of your ſouls? Are you diſcouraged by your Poverty and Barrenneſs? Do you complain how weak and inſufficient you are for your work, how low and ſcant 'tis with you in reſpect of Grace and Strength? Do you doubt how you ſhall hold up, and hold on? Do you thirſt and faint after the influences of Heaven? Do you fear you ſhall waſt and wither, and conſume away in your ſouls Penury? O to the Rock, to the Rock, go to Chriſt, and truſt him for ſupplies. There are theſe three things that he looks you ſhould depend upon him for. 1. For the continued influence of his Grace, whereby to hold and maintain your ſouls in life. 2. For aſſiſtance in Duty, for his Spirit to help your Infirmities, and to work your works in you. 3. For all needful and neceſſary Comforts.

You are yet but Children, and as Children you have not your ſtock in your own hands, you have but from hand to mouth, every day you will need new proviſions: You are Children, and as Children, can't go alone; *without me* (ſaies Chriſt) *you can do nothing*, Joh. 15. 5. You are apt to be comfortleſs Children, and 'tis He that hath ſaid, *Iſa.* 51. 12. *I even I am He that comforteth you:* Learn to know your own ſtate, and carry it accordingly. Haſt thou Grace? Improve it, preſerve it, and make the beſt of it; but never count you have enough to laſt you till you come home; you muſt to the Breaſts every day, you muſt to Chriſt for your daily Bread, or you will quickly ſtarve. Haſt thou a little ſtrength;

ſtrength.

ſtrength for Duty? Improve it to the utmoſt, be diligent and buſie in the work of the Lord, in every good work, in Hearing and Praying, and Watching, and ſtriving againſt ſin, in mortifying the Fleſh, in helping and ſtrengthning one another; do what-ever you can, be as active and ſtirring, and induſtrious as poſſible, but go not in your own ſtrength, truſt not to the ſtrength you have, but let this be your hold which was the Apoſtles, *Phil.* 4. 13. I ſhall *be able to do all things through Chriſt, which ſtrengtheneth me. Truſt ye in the Lord* Jehovah, truſt ye in the Lord Jeſus, *for in him is everlaſting ſtrength*, Iſa. 26. 4. Have ye comfort in your hearts? Say not as the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 30. 5. *I ſhall never be moved, thou Lord of thy goodneſs haſt made my Mountain ſo ſtrong*, but know that you will need to fetch in freſh comforts as you have of daily ſupplies of ſtrength.

Well, thus this Truſt will anſwer to theſe and all other the doubting queſtions that a Chriſtian will have to put in his life-time, whilſt he lives in this Wilderneſs; who will ſhew me my way, who will ſuſtain me in my way, till *I* come to my Journeys end, *&c.* Chriſt will do it, *I* truſt He will.

2. Caſe. *I have a* Jordain *to paſs over, I muſt dye, who will bring me over* Jordain, *who will ſtand by me in that hour?* He is an eſtabliſhed Chriſtian who is able to dye; who can ſay with the Apoſtle, *To me to live is Chriſt, to dye is gain, none of theſe things move me. I am ready to be offered up, I deſire to depart and to be with Chriſt.* Then is the Life of Jeſus moſt ſignally manifeſted in our mortal Fleſh, when we can by Faith tryumph over mortality.

But as for me, I am afraid to dye; I am one of their weakly ſouls, who for fear of death, are all their life-time ſubject to Bondage. I walk unevenly and uncomelily, becauſe upon this account I walk ſo

uncom-

uncomfortably. How may I out-grow my fears, and come to a ſettlement? How ſhall I do to dye? If I could dye, I could live to better purpoſe than now I do, or can: What ſhall I have to comfort me? Whom ſhall I have to ſtand by me in that hour? Truſt anſwers, why Chriſt will ſtand by me. He that hath taught me to live, will I truſt, help me to dye. He hath conquer'd Death, he hath diſarm'd, and pluck'd out the ſting of Death, He hath broken the head of that *Leviathan:* 'Twas He that ſaid, *Hoſ.* 13. 14. *O Death, I will be thy death, O Grave, I will be thy deſtruction.* He hath ſaid it, and He hath done it; He himſelf hath paſſed over that *Jordain*, and hath thereby made a way for his Ranſomed to paſs over. He will ſend his Angels to conduct me through that ſhady and diſmal paſſage; He knows what it is to dye, how hard the conflict is with the laſt Enemy, and what ſpecial need I ſhall have of his help in that hour; and therefore hath ſaid, *I will never fail thee nor forſake thee*, Heb. 13. 5. If I can but hold me by him while I live, I will hang upon him when I dye, and with Confidence ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 23. 4. *Though I walk through the Valley of the ſhaddow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me:* He hath ſaid, *Joh.* 11. 25. *Whoever liveth, and believeth in me, though he were dead, yet ſhall he live*: He hath ſaid, *Rev.* 20. 6. *Bleſſed is he that hath part in the firſt Reſurrection, on him the ſecond death ſhall have no power.* Come on therefore O my ſoul, fear not to lanch forth into the deep; truſt in Chriſt, He that hath delivered, and doth deliver, will alſo deliver in that day, [from] death he will not deliver, *it's appointed to all once to dye*, there's no repealing that Statute, but He will deliver [in] death, He will by death deliver me from all my fears and ſorrows. Who of all His, ever miſcarryed in death?

death? Look to this, that thou be one of His, hold thee by Him, cleave to Him, follow Him while thou liveſt, be faithful to Him to the death, and truſt to Him, He will be faithful to thee in death.

3. Caſe. *I have an Inheritance which I hope for in the Land of Promiſe:* And here the queſtion will be, *Who ſhall give me entrance, who ſhall give me poſſeſſion of mine Inheritance?* There is a great Gulf fixed betwixt me and Glory; there is a Judgment that I muſt paſs through in my entrance into the Reſt of God; and in that Judgment I muſt paſs under a ſtrict and ſevere examination, and give an account of my ſelf, and of all my ways unto God. O how ſhall I ſtand in the Judgments, or who ſhall ſtand by me? I am a Sinner, a guilty ſoul before the Lord, and mine Iniquities are all marked before Him. Once *I* was an Enemy to Chriſt, and how much hath he againſt me for that time? Since *I* became his Servant, and Solemnly Covenanted and Vowed my ſelf to Him, Vowed Repentance, Vowed Obedience, Vowed Holineſs to him, O what a Servant have *I* been? What an idle and ſloathful Servant? What a barren and unprofitable Servant? He hath made me his Child, but O what a wanton, unruly, froward Child have *I* been? How often have *I* turn'd aſide from him, and ſerv'd my Fleſh and this preſent World? O my Pride and Hypocriſie, O my trifling and my haltings after the Lord, O the reproaches that have fallen upon his Name by my unworthy, uneven, and uncomely walking before him? How ſhall I anſwer for this in the Judgment, or who ſhall anſwer for me? Who ſhall ſtop the Mouth of my Accuſer in that day? Chriſt I truſt will do it; I put my whole Cauſe into his Hand, He ſhall be my Advocate againſt my Accuſer, whom I will truſt to plead for me; He hath his Stripes and his Wounds, He hath

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his Blood and his Death to anſwer for me. *It is Chriſt that dyed*, who ſhall condemn, *Rom.* 8. 34.

But what ſhall I have to confirm my truſt in Chriſt? and to ſecure me, that he will anſwer for me? There be many that lay claim to Chriſt amongſt the Unbelievers & the workers of Iniquity; they will put their truſt in Chriſt, and will call to him, *Lord, Lord, open to me*, Mat. 7. 22, 23. Lord, Lord, anſwer for me; to whom he will ſay, *Away from me, I know you not.* I will not ſpeak a word for you, ye workers of Iniquity. O what ſhall I have to ſecure me from ſuch a repulſe, and to aſſure me that he will be an Advocate for me? If I can but get Chriſt to be mine Advocate, there's no doubt then but my matters will be good, and the cauſe will go for me; here's the difficulty: What ſhall I have to prove my title to Chriſt and his Advocation? and to ſecure me that he will undertake for me? Why, my very truſt (if it be ſincere) will prove my Title. He that truſteth in him ſhall not be confounded. And for the evidencing the ſincerity of this truſt, a confirmed Chriſtian will have this to ſay, Through the grace of God, I have the teſtimony of a good Conſcience and an holy Converſation; my works of Faith, and my labours of Love, my mortified Sins, this crucified and conquered World, through the Spirit of Chriſt within me, for whom I have forſaken all and followed Him, theſe will atteſt the truth of my truſt; though none of theſe things, none of my Graces, none of my Dutyes can anſwer for me, or acquit me in the Judgment, or open the door of Glory to me, yet they will be good evidences to prove my claim to Chriſt that can and will do it. When Chriſt ſhall plead, I have dyed for Sinners, and thereupon ſhall challenge Abſolution and entrance for thoſe that have believed in Him, and obeyed his Goſpel; the Accuſer will re-

ply, But this Man hath not believed, hath not obeyed the Gospel; but now if I can get that to be evidenced by the testimony of a good Conscience and my holy Conversation, then the mouth of the Accuser will be stopped for ever against me; and so an entrance shall be administred to me abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom. And here now is the trust of the Saints, and its tryumph over all matters of doubt and difficulties that lye between them and everlasting Glory. From hence may they take up those words of the Apostle, 1 *Cor.* 15. *Death, where is thy Sting? Grave,* yea Sin, Hell, Devil, *where is your Victory? Thanks be to God, who hath given me the Victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

From what hath been said, learn by the way, 1. *That the life of a Christian in this World, is to be a life of trust.* 2. *That a life of trust is an excellent and desirable life, and worth your reaching after.* But these I shall speak to, together.

Christ is to be trusted not only for the world to come, to give us entrance into Heaven, but for this world also to lead and help us on, to be with us in all our way from first to last. Our great difficulty, and our great danger of miscarrying, is not so much in our end, as in our way to it: As hard as 'tis to dye well, 'tis harder to live well: Though the last Enemy, Death, looks with a more frightful face, yet our Enemies that we meet with all along our lives, Sin, and Lust, and Temptation, do us the most deadly mischief. He that hath conquered Sin, need not fear to encounter Death; do but live an Holy Life, and then be nothing careful how ye shall dye. Those Saints, *Heb.* 11. *Abel, Abraham, Sarah,* with the rest of them, 'tis Recorded that they liv'd by Faith; it's said of them, *v.* 13. *They all dyed by Faith,* not one amongst them miscarryed in Death, who by

Faith

Faith kept close to God in their lives.

Now our great difficulty and danger being in our lives, there is the most need of trusting in Christ for his conduct through this World, and this being that which I am now especially directing you to be reaching to, that I may more effectually lead you on to such a life of trust, I shall yet more particularly shew you that Christ must be trusted for,

1. *Our entrance into Religion.*
2. *Our progress in Religion.*
3. *Our perseverance in Religion.*

1. *It is Christ that must do the first work for us, must bring us in at the straight Gate, and give us entrance into Religion.* Who brought *Israel* out of *Egypt?* Cut out a passage for them through the Red Sea, and set them into the way of the Promised Land? 'Twas the same *Moses* that conducted them through the Wilderness. Christians, you that have passed the New Birth, and have broken out of the Womb; you that are escaped out of *Egypt*, that state of Bondage you once were in, with the rest of this miserable World, and are now gotten safe into the way of life; Who is it that hath helped you hitherto? Are you not beholden to Christ for this? As it was said of the second Resurrection, 1 *Cor.* 15. 22. so 'tis true of the first Resurrection, *As in* Adam *all dye, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* Are there any living souls amongst you? 'Tis Christ who is your Life. And who is it that must help after, and bring in those that are behind, and quicken those that are yet dead? Is it not the same Jesus that must do it? Sinners, you that have been left dead in your sins, some of you have not trod one step towards the New Birth, others of you have been brought to the Birth, but still stick in the Womb: What hope have you, that you shall ever be new Born? If you be not new Born, there's

no hope of you, but you muſt dye for ever; better you had never been Born into this World, then not to be Born a new to Chriſt: You muſt dye, there's no help for you, there's no hope of you, you muſt dye eternally, the ſecond Death will ſeize upon you, and ſwallow you up for ever if you be not Born the ſecond time. You are yet without the Gate, and if you dye there, dye in your ſins, dye in your ignorance, in your impenitence and unbelief; if ye dye without the ſtreight Gate, you go down quick into the Pit.

Now what hope is there of your being brought in? Multitudes of your Predeceſſors in ſin, have never come in, have liv'd and dyed, and gone to their Graves, and gone down to Hell in their impenitence, and down you are going apace: What hope is there now, that you may ſtop before you come there, that you may be brought about, out of that common rode, that broad way that you are going, and brought into the narrow gate, that gate of Life? May be you will ſay, Chriſt I truſt will do it; and the truth is, that's all you have to ſay, that's all the hope you have; there's the ſame Jeſus before you, who hath brought in ſo many others, who ſays to you all, as *Iſa.*45.22. *Look unto me, and ye ſhall be ſaved. None cometh to the Father, but by me*; and *Joh.* 6. 37. *Him that cometh to me, that will truſt upon me*, to bring him to God, *I will in no wiſe caſt him out.* Go to Jeſus Sinners, tell him, Lord, thou haſt told me that none can come to the Father, can turn from his ſins and come in unto God, but by thee; this thou haſt told me, and I have found it true; I cannot come in of my ſelf, mine own heart hangs back, hangs after my ſins, and this world, and hangs back from God. Miniſters cannot bring me in, they have been almoſt all my life long dealing with me; threatning me in, perſwading

and beſeeching me in, but cannot prevail: Poor wretched Creature that I am, after all the means that have been uſed to bring me in to God, behold I am an hardned impenitent ſoul to this day, and ſo I am like to dye for all that they can do to help me: I have nothing left for it, but only thy help, Oh Lord, and thy word for it, that thou wilt help me, and wilt not put me back if I come to thee: This being all mine hope, I come unto thee, I caſt my ſelf upon that bleſſed Word, Help O King of Saints, help O Saviour of Sinners; Chriſt help, Chriſt help this poor ſoul of mine; help me to God, that I may live; having nothing elſe for it, upon this I muſt venture, upon thee I muſt lean; I come to thy door, there I will lye, begging and crying, and hoping that thou wilt put forth thine hand and help me in. Lord open to me, I truſt yet thou wilt, and in this truſt I will continue crying and begging till thou have Mercy on me, and bring me within this ſtraight gate, the gate of Life.

2. *'Tis Chriſt that muſt do all our following works for us.* By him we have our entrance, and through him we muſt make our progreſs; He muſt bring us in at the ſtraight gate, muſt convert our ſouls, and 'tis He that muſt help us on in the narrow way, and conduct our ſouls through all the duties and difficulties of our whole life. The Mother muſt Nurſe the Child as well as bring it forth into the World; the Child muſt be carryed in Armes, muſt be Suckled and ſupported, and muſt afterward be taught to ſpeak, and taught to go; and though our Children may, yet God's Children will never be taught to go alone while they live. They muſt keep by their Fathers ſide, they muſt be led by their Fathers hand as long as they live. Chriſt muſt do all this for his Children, and He will do it, *Iſa.* 40. 11. He will *gather his Lambs with his Armes,*

He will carry them in his Bosom, and gently lead them.

When we are entred into the strait gate, when we are passed the New Birth, the great difficulty is over; Sinners, there are many difficult passages between you and the Kingdom of Heaven, through all which you must pass or perish. There are these three hard passages, *the straits of the Womb*, or the difficulties of the New Birth; *the strait course*, or the difficulties of Life; *the hard passage at the end*, the difficulties at Death. But the great difficulty is the first, when you are once passed the Birth, the great difficulty will be over. If you go on and dye in your sins, then there is not only a difficulty, but an impossibility; there is a great Gulf fixed between Heaven and Hell, *Luk.* 16. So that they that would, cannot pass from Hell to Heaven. O keep you out of Hell, when once you come there, you cannot escape; thank God, that yet, though it be hard, yet 'tis possible for you to get to Heaven; and you that are Saints, may rejoyce, that with you the great difficulty is over.

But yet the narrow way, in which you must continue, is an hard way. The narrow way, by which you must pass to glory, is that course of Holiness wherein you must hold on to the end: There's no getting to Heaven but by this narrow way, and there's no getting through this narrow way but by help from Christ; and therefore your whole life must be a life of trust, of trust in Christ, Christ must be trusted,

1. *For the helping us forward in all his Holy ways.*

2. *For the helping us through the sufferings we shall meet with in his ways.*

1. *For the helping us forward in all his Holy ways.* 'Tis from Him we muſt expect to proſper in our way, 'tis He that muſt lead us on towards, and raiſe and work us up to that holy Conformity of heart and life to him, wherein our ſouls proſperity ſtands. Here I ſhall ſhortly ſhew you,

1. *That our progreſs in Religion is to be meaſured by the degree of our conformity to Chriſt.*

2. *That eminent Conformity to Chriſt, is that which Chriſtians have, or ſhould have in their eye.*

3. *That Chriſtians falling ſo much ſhort of this Conformity to Chriſt, fall under many doubts and fears, whether ever they ſhall attain to it.*

4. *Their truſt in Chriſt, is their help againſt all their doubts and fears.*

1. *Our progreſs in Religion is to be meaſured by the degree of our conformity to Chriſt.* There's a double conformity to Chriſt,

To his Image.

To his Will.

Our being renewed according to his Image, in our inner Man, and our being governed by his Word, both in our inward and outward Man. Now by how much the nearer we are made like unto Chriſt, by how much the more of the Image of his Holineſs, there is engraven upon our hearts, and by how much the more compliance there is of our ways with the will and holy word of Chriſt, ſo much the more progreſs have we made in Religion.

2. *This holy conformity to Chriſt is that which Chriſtians have, or ſhould have in their eye and deſire.* Chriſt is a Chriſtians *Prize*, and a Chriſtians *pattern*. He is the *Prize* which a Chriſtian runs for; what would you have as the fruit of all your labours and ſufferings? O Chriſt, Chriſt, that Chriſt may be mine; and he is their *Pattern*, the pattern that God hath ſet

before them, and that they alſo have ſet before themſelves that their eye and their heart is ſet upon. What is your aim? What is it that you are reaching towards, and working up your ſelves unto? What manner of perſons would you be? How would you live? If you may have your wiſh, or your deſire, what is it? What would you be? How would you live? O let me be made conformable to Chriſt. We may find both theſe in the Apoſtles eye, in compariſon of which, he counted all things but loſs and dung, *Phil.* 3. 8, 9, 10. that he may win Chriſt, and that he may be conformable to Chriſt. *For whom I have ſuffered the loſs of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him*; and v. 10. *that I may know him, and the power of his Reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his Sufferings, and be made conformable to his Death.* Every Chriſtian is of the ſame mind, all is dung in compariſon of him; and 'tis not only *to be found in Chriſt*, that he ſo earneſtly deſires, but alſo to be *made conformable to him.* They would live as he lived, and as he would have them live; they would not only, that they may be bleſſed in Chriſt, but that Chriſt may be pleaſed in them. They never have their wills, but when Chriſt hath his will of them. It does not ſuffice me ſaith a Chriſtian, that I have hopes of getting to Heaven by Chriſt at laſt, I muſt be more holy here; I would live ſo, that my ways may pleaſe Chriſt: How can I bear it to be ſo unlike to him, to be ſo often breaking out, and breaking looſe from him? O that I might hold me cloſe by Him, that I might in my whole courſe pleaſe the Lord. I would fain be a more exact and perfect Chriſtian. All this the Apoſtle follows ſo hard after, *Phil.* 3. 12. *Not as though I had already obtained, or were already perfect, but I follow after, if I may apprehend,*

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Brethren, this is as far forth as you are Chriſtians, and this ſhould be the ſum of your deſires and aims, to get as near as poſſible to an exact conformity to Chriſt, both to his Image, that as he was, ſo you may be in this World, and to his will, that you may ſtand compleat in all the wills of Chriſt.

3. *Chriſtians falling ſo much ſhort of that holy conformity to Chriſt, they deſire, do fall under many doubts and fears how they ſhall attain.* O how ſhort do I fall of ſuch an holy frame, of ſuch an holy and undefiled courſe! When I look upon what I would be, and what I am, what a diſtance is there, how far am I yet behind, how hardly can I reconcile my looſe and lazy heart, to ſuch a ſtrict and holy courſe? My untoward heart, O how it ſlugs and hangs back, and will not come on! O how it boggles & breaks looſe, how many a ſtep doth it make out of this narrow, into the broad way! O how it luſts after the eaſe and liberties of the fleſh, and how often doth it turn aſide from Chriſt to the vain ways and lying vanities of this preſent World? When I would be totally conformed to the Law of Chriſt, I find another Law in my members, carrying me out to a compliance with the Law of Sin. I am warping every day, I am wandring in every duty, I am apt to loſe my ſelf in every Company I come into, in every buſineſs I ſet my ſelf to: I cant but look upon it as a comfortable thing, and as a bleſſed thing, if mine heart might be ever with the Lord; if I could keep me cloſe by his ſide, and conſtantly under his eye: What a mercy, what a joy would it be? but Woe is me, I cannot obtain; I have wiſhed, and hoped, and prayed; I have tryed, and tryed, and ſtill I fall ſhort; O how little hope is there left, that yet I ſhall obtain?

4. *Their*

4. *Their truſt in Chriſt is their help againſt all their diſcouragements and fears.* Doſt thou ſay, there's no hope, I ſhall not obtain? To perfect conformity to Chriſt thou canſt not; but is there no hope of thy becoming a more eminent Chriſtian than now thou art? Rebuke that unbelieving thought with this word, yet I truſt in Chriſt I ſhall. He is *able to ſave to the uttermoſt, all that come unto God by Him*, Heb. 7. 25. Not only to ſave them from wrath, but to ſave them from ſin; to ſave them to the uttermoſt, and to ſanctifie them to the uttermoſt. Do not ſay, I cannot think how this weak, ſlippery, looſe, untoward heart, I cannot think how it ſhould ever come to be ſetled and fixed in ſuch a ſevere and holy courſe; do not ſay ſuch a word, Can'ſt thou not think how? Yet he is *able to do for thee abundantly above all that thou canſt ask or think*, *Eph.* 3. 20. His thoughts are not as thy thoughts, his ways are not as thy ways; the Lord Chriſt can over-do the thoughts of his People, can do that for them which they never thought could be done; yea, and if thou wilt truſt him, he will do it. Conſider and ſtudy that Scripture, *Pſal.* 37. 5. *Commit thy way to the Lord, truſt in Him and He will bring it to paſs.* Thou haſt many good things upon thine heart, thou canſt not take up with this poor and pittiful, and in and out way of life that thou liveſt; thou wouldſt fain come to a more ſpiritual, Heavenly, active, uſeful, courſe of life: This thou propoſeſt to thy ſelf, this thou haſt made ſome offers and attempts upon, but thou canſt not bring it to paſs, but ſtill thou falleſt ſhort; what ſhouldſt thou now do? why commit thy way to the Lord, truſt in Him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs; and as *v.* 4. He ſhall give thee the deſire of thine heart.

Chriſtians, I hope your hearts are ſet upon this holy conformity to Chriſt, I hope you will not ſit down

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by what you have already attained; God forbid, that that eaſie trifling way of Religion, that is all that ſome of you have attained; God forbid that this ſhould ſatisfie you, and I hope it does not; I hope you are both wiſhing for, and reaching towards a more ſtrict and painful courſe. Are you ſo? hold on. If you have prayed for it, pray again, *pray without ceaſing*, 1 Theſ. 5. 17. Never give over till you have it. Have you tryed what you can do, to mend your courſe, and mend your pace? Try again and again, never ſit down as diſcouraged, but hold you on, keep to the way of the Lord as you can; keep you going, keep ſtriving and labouring with your hearts, with your might, and in ſo doing, commit your way to the Lord, truſt in him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs; do what you can, through the grace already received, and what you cannot, truſt in Chriſt, and he will do it for you. 'Tis not an idle truſt as I ſaid before, that I exhort you to, ſuch a truſt as to ſave you the labour: Never ſay I truſt in Chriſt that he will work my work in me, and for me, and ſo caſt off all care your ſelves; 'tis not an idle truſt, but a ſtirring truſt, an encourageing truſt, heartening you to the work: Keep doing, keep going, keep ſtriving towards a more holy ſerviceable life, and then truſt in Chriſt, and he ſhall bring it to paſs, and give you your hearts deſire.

Chriſtians, my hearts deſire, and prayer for you is, that you may be ſaved; I would fain help you to Heaven; and that you might be preſented by Chriſt to the Father, without ſpot or wrinkle; and in order hereto, I would fain ſee more of the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and the holy Image of Chriſt, breathing forth, and ſhewing it ſelf more conſpicuouſly in all your ways. I ſtudy what I can to Preach ſo to you, that my words may be effectual to bring you up to

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an higher pitch of Holineſs; and this is my encouragement, *my truſt in the living God;* that my labours with you ſhall not be in vain. I Pray and truſt, I Preach and truſt, I labour among you and truſt; and what is my truſt? Why this is it, that the Lord will ſo ſecond my labours with you, that you may hear and truſt, that you may ſtrive and truſt, that whilſt I ſtrive with you, you may be brought to it, to ſtrive every one of you with your own hearts, putting your truſt in the Lord. So ſhall you find in your experiences that this life of truſt will be a life of tryumph over all your weakneſſes, doubts, and fears.

How Chriſt helps us to *perſevere,* (which ſhould next come to be ſpoken of,) will appear in the next particular, and therefore I paſs it by here.

2. *For the helping us through the ſufferings that we ſhall meet with in his ways.* Chriſt muſt be truſted here for theſe two things.

1. *To help us in what we are to do, with reſpect to a ſuffering ſtate.*

2. *To perform what he hath undertaken to do for his ſuffering People.*

1. *To help us in what we are to do, with reſpect to a ſuffering ſtate.* There are 4. things that you your ſelves are to do, to prepare you for a ſuffering ſtate.

1. *You muſt give up your ſelves, and all that you have, to be diſpoſed of by him at his pleaſure.* Say of your ſelves, I am his own; ſay of all that you have, all is Chriſts. As Chriſt hath ſaid of himſelf, and all that he hath, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *All is yours*; ſo ſay you of your ſelves, and all that you have, all is thine Lord; this Houſe, and theſe Lands, and this Money, all is thine, I give thee the full right to it all. Say you ſo, and be willing that he ſhould ſay, as in the Parable, *Mat.* 20. 15. *May I not do with mine own what I pleaſe?* If I

leave

leave it to thee to enjoy, or if I give it to Strangers for a ſpoil and a booty, 'tis mine own, and I may beſtow it where ever I pleaſe. Say not only as the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 119. 94. *I am thine, ſave me*; but I am thine, afflict me; bring me low, take from me whatever thou wilt; all that I have is thine, 'tis at thy command, 'tis at thy ſervice; call for it, and uſe it at thy pleaſure; if thou order it for the Spoilers, to the Spoilers let it go; let them ſtrip me naked, and ſhare it amongſt themſelves if the Lord will have it ſo.

2. *You muſt keep you faſt by Chriſt, and ſit looſe from all things elſe.* Give your ſelves to Chriſt, and cleave unto Chriſt; do not ſay I am thine, and then go a gadding and wandring after Strangers: Stick faſt to Chriſt, be able to ſay, Pſ. 119. 31. *I have ſtuck to thy Teſtimonies.* I have ſtuck to the Lord, and I will ſtick to thee; I am thine, and nothing ſhall ſeparate between me and thee; ſtick to Chriſt, and ſit looſe from all things elſe; let not any thing thou haſt given him, ſtick to thy fingers, nor let thine heart hanker after it.

You have Eſtates ſome of you; you live in the favour and friendſhip of Men, you have an eſteem and repute among them; but let not theſe be overmuch prized and valued by you. You that have Eſtates, be as if you had them not. You that have Friends, and their love and good will, be as if you had none, as the Apoſtle adviſeth, 1 *Cor.* 7. 29. Never ſpeak ſuch a word, I [muſt] keep mine Eſtate, I cannot part with it; I muſt keep my Friends, I cannot diſoblige them; get your hearts ſo looſe from all, that if Chriſt ſhould call you to ſuch a bold owning of him, as would ſweep away all you have, and leave you never a Penny, nor never a Friend in all the World, you could chearfully ſubmit. The ſitting thus looſe from

from all we have afore-hand, would make it leſs grievous and leſs difficult, when ſufferings come, to loſe them all. He, whoſe heart cleaves to any thing, ſo that he ſays, This I cannot part with, this will either part Chriſt and him, or create him the more torment to part with it, when he ſees it muſt go. Remember *Lots* Wife, when called out of *Sodom*, where ſhe muſt leave all behind her; her heart being left there, and thereupon looking back, as loth to depart, ſhe was ſmitten into a Pillar of Salt.

3. *Reckon upon nothing certain or ſure to you under the Sun.* Do not think, becauſe you have kept all about you hitherto, that you ſhall never loſe it; count upon it, there may a neceſſity be laid upon you that all muſt be parted with. Do not give your ſelves to Chriſt, and all that you have, in confidence that he will not take it, or call for it away: Poſſibly this may be the caſe of ſome, they can eaſily ſay, I give my ſelf, and all I have to Chriſt; and for Him, I am content to ſuffer the loſs of all; but 'tis upon this confidence, that they ſhall never be put to it: They hope they may be Chriſtians, and yet never be call'd out to be ſuffering Chriſtians: they can eaſily paſs away their right, in hope that Chriſt will continue them in conſtant poſſeſſion. Think no ſuch vain thought, but what you give to Chriſt, count upon it, that Chriſt may ſend ſome or other to turn you out of Poſſeſſion; reckon upon it, that you may be quickly in ſuch a caſe, wherein you may be put to it, either to forſake Chriſt, or actually to be ſpoiled of all that you have.

4. *Make ſure of ſomething*: of ſomething that the greateſt ſufferings cannot prejudice you in, or take away from you. This is the goodneſs of God to his, that whereas there is but one thing needful; this one thing is certain, *Luk.* 10. 41. *One thing is needful,*

Mary

Mary *hath choſen the good part which ſhall never be taken from her.* There is but one thing needful, and that one thing is certain; That good part could never be taken from her.

To be totally undone and ruined, is intolerable. God never called any of his Servants to it, nor ever will. He never calls for ſo much, but he ſtill leaves them ſomething which he would not have them part with. They are only the Damned in Hell, whoſe caſe this is, they have loſt all, and have nothing left them. There is ſomething for you to get and keep, which will be ſure to you: O get the Lord God to be your Portion, get Chriſt to be your Inheritance; get you ſanctified Grace, get an upright heart, and a good Conſcience, and make them ſure. Chriſtians, you cannot poſſibly be able to bear the loſs of all things, unleſs you may have this ſomething left. Make Chriſt ſure, make your title to everlaſting glory ſure; get Integrity and Uprightneſs, a good Conſcience, an holy Converſation, to be ſure evidences of your title; charily preſerve and maintain theſe evidences, and then the worſt Enemies you have either in Earth or Hell, can never undoe you, no, nor leave you in a worſe caſe than you are: If you ſhould loſe your Eſtates, all your Friends, yea, and your life to boot, you are no loſers, whilſt you can but keep Faith and a good Conſcience.

Well now, theſe 4. things you are your ſelves to do, to prepare you for ſuffering. Give your ſelves, and all you have, to Chriſt's diſpoſe, *&c.* and then you are ready for the Croſs; then let the Devil and all his Armies fall on, you are ready to receive their charge without giving an inch of ground.

But who can do all this, or how ſhall I ever be able to come to it? The firſt of theſe I hope you have done already: If ye be Chriſtians, you have given your

ſelves

ſelves and all you have to Chriſt; but how ſhall I do to keep me cloſe to Chriſt, to ſit ſo looſe from all things, to make ſure of Chriſt, to maintain the teſtimony of a good Conſcience and an holy Converſation? Woe is me, I am breaking looſe from Chriſt at every turn, I have a fickle and unſtable ſoul that's apt to wander every day; and for things below, though I have given them to Chriſt, yet I feel mine heart ſtill cleaving to them, and hankering and hanging after them: I can't think of being made Poor, I can't think of being made a Reproach, or a Scorn, or a Prey; I can't think of it with any patience; what ſhall I do in this caſe? Why here's that which will do it, truſt upon Chriſt to help you; pray for ſuch a diſengaged ſpirit, pray for ſuch a power, pray for ſuch a frame; reaſon, and do what you can to perſwade your ſelves into it; preſs your ſelves on to ſuch a cloſe conſcientious, holy Converſation; ſtrive and labour, and be reaching on towards it, and then truſt upon Chriſt to bring you to it. Commit thy way to him, and he ſhall bring it to paſs; he ſhall put thee into ſuch a condition wherein thou ſhalt be Croſs-proof, whatever thy Croſſes be. This is one of Chriſt's ways, by which he helps his Saints to bear the Croſs; he prepares them for it, and he muſt and will do it if he be ſincerely truſted for it: It thenceforth lyes upon him, his faithfulneſs ſtands engaged to work all your works in you where your faith hath put it into his hands.

2. *Truſt him to perform what he hath undertaken to do for you,* What hath he undertaken to do for his ſuffering People? 1. To ſupport them in their ſufferings, *Pſal.* 55. 22. *Caſt thy burden upon the Lord, and he ſhall ſuſtain* or uphold thee; the burthen of thy ſorrows, the burthen of thy ſufferings, the burthen of thy fears; thou haſt Enemies that will bind heavy burthens, and lay them upon thee; burthens of Reproaches, bur-

thens

thens of wants, burthens of thornes, pricking and piercing burthens; and it may be thou wilt ſay, how can I bear all theſe burthens? I ſink, I ſink, my ſpirit, ſails within me, heavy things there are come upon me; O what ſhall I do to bear them? Why caſt thy burthen upon the Lord, truſt upon him, and he will ſuſtain thee, *Phil.* 4.5,6. *Let your moderation be known unto all Men*: Be not over ſolicitous what you ſhall do, or how you ſhall ſtand; *Be careful for nothing, the Lord is at hand.* 2. To preſerve them from falling; from falling away from Chriſt, from falling off from their holy profeſſion, *Jude* 24. He is *able to keep you from falling, and to preſent you faultleſs before the preſence of his glory*; and as he is able, ſo he is faithful, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 24. *Faithful is he that hath called you, and will do it*: What will he do? why *v.* 23. he will preſerve you blameleſs unto his coming. Chriſtians, be careful about your preſent duty, and then never torment your ſelves with thoughtfulneſs and fears, how you ſhall ſtand your groud under the greateſt of ſufferings, but as the Apoſtle, 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. *Let them that ſuffer, commit the keeping of their ſouls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* And thus I have ſhewed you the ſecond particular, wherein that ſolidity or eſtabliſhment in Religion (which I am preſſing you to reach after) ſtands, *viz.* a firm truſt in Chriſt.

3. *Adherence to Chriſt, or cleaving to the Lord.* The two main Roots, whereby a Chriſtian is grounded in Chriſt, are the two fore-mentioned, *Reſolution and Truſt*; and the immediate fruits of this rooting, is cleaving or ſticking faſt unto him; and the cloſer we cleave unto him, the more we are confirmed and eſtabliſhed. The root of a Tree is that by which it cleaves unto the ground; and by how much the deeper it ſpreads it ſelf, and works its ſelf into the Earth, by ſo much the faſter hold it takes. And there is a mutual

hold taken; the root takes hold of the ground, and thereby the ground holds fast the root. A rooted Christian hath gotten hold of Christ, and Christ hath taken hold of him, we have both these together, *Phil.* 8. 12. *If I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.*

Christ's hold of a Christian is sure, but not always perceived, *Joh.* 10. 28, 29. *My Sheep hear my voyce, and follow me, and I give to them eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* There are many attempts upon the Saints; the World pulls at them, Sin pulls, the Devil pulls, and would pluck them off from Christ, and pluck them up by the roots; but saies Christ, for all that, they are safe enough, pluck who will, they shall not be pluck'd away.

But as sure as Christ holds them, they may sometimes think he hath let go his hold, and cast them off; and may say as the Psalmist, *Psal.* 43. 2. *Why hast thou cast me off Lord?* Where am I now? I once had hopes that the Lord was my strength; but woe is me, now I am even cut off, and mine hope is perished from the Lord; I fear, that after all my hopes, I shall prove a lost soul at last.

And as Christ's hold of a Christian, so a Christians hold of Christ is always sure, though he himself always perceive it not. That Prayer of Christ for *Peter*, is for every particular Christian, that his Faith may never fail; that hand of Faith may grow weak, but shall never wither. It may shake, yet still as the hand of a drowning Man, it keeps its hold. Yet as to his own sense, he may be at a loss, and sometimes come to this conclusion; if ever I had Faith, yet now I am sure I have none.

Well, but however, though a Christian may sometimes think I have cast off, and let go mine hold of Christ; and thereupon he hath cast off, and let go his

hold

hold of me; yet even then, when 'tis ſaddeſt and loweſt with him, he ſtill cleaves to Chriſt.

There are theſe two things which ſhall never totally fail. 1. *There is a ſecret ſtay upon Chriſt*; this he may do, and does, even then when he thinks he does not, nor cannot. There is an hope hidden in his heart, even then when he ſays, There is no hope: That it may be ſo, appears from *Iſa.* 50.10. *Who is there that walks in darkneſs, and hath no light, let him truſt in the name of the Lord, and ſtay himſelf upon his God.* That is, even then, when he is in darkneſs and hath no light; at ſuch a time there may be ſuch a ſtay, God would not command him to impoſſibilities. What is it to be in darkneſs, and to have no light? Why no leſ, then to give up all for loſt; to be in the darkneſs of an uncomfortable and hopeleſs ſtate, and not to have ſo much light as to diſcern his holy habits or actings that ſhould comfort him. Why yet, even then there may be a ſtay, or elſe God would never have bid him, even in ſuch a caſe, to ſtay himſelf upon his God. There may be a ſtay, and there is ſo; for, do but ask ſuch a poor dark diſconſolate Chriſtian, when as to his ſenſe he is moſt hopeleſs, and ſays I have no hope; do but ask him then, why what will you take to give up and forgoe all your hope in Chriſt? Will you be hired for ever to quit your hope in Chriſt? O no, not for all the world; look ye there now, though he ſays he hath no hope, yet all the world ſhall not hire him to let go that hope he hath.

2. *Are reſolved cleaving to Chriſt.* He doth ſtill when 'tis loweſt with him, *with purpoſe of heart cleave* unto Him. He thinks here alſo, that he hath no mind, nor luſt to follow Chriſt or Holineſs any longer, judging it will be all in vain. I, but ask ſuch a poor Chriſtian, Will you return then to take up your lot with Sinners, and give off from ſerving or following Chriſt

any longer? Will you return to your old Luſts, to your old carnal and fleſhly Life? Will you return from Chriſt to embrace this preſent World? Since you have no hope to the other World, will you return to make your beſt of this World? Will you to Ryoting and Drunkenneſs, will you to your old Covetouſneſs and Greedineſs, will you hence-forth go back and live in a total neglect of Chriſt, and his holy ways; will you give off hearing, and give off praying, and give off the trouble and care of an holy watchful Life, and let looſe the reins to your corrupt Nature, and let it take its own courſe? Will you do ſo? Can you do ſo? O the Lord forbid, ſure I will never go back how-ever; if I never come to Heaven, yet I will not return to wickedneſs. God will ſpeak Peace to his People; but though he never ſpeak Peace to me, yet I will not return to folly. Though I cannot ſay with *Job*, cap. 13. 15. *Though he Slay me, yet will I truſt in him:* Yet this will I ſay, though he Slay me, yea, though he Damn me, yet will I ſerve him: If I muſt to Hell, yet I am reſolved that Holineſs ſhall be my way. I will not allow my ſelf to ſlight Chriſt, or to ſin againſt Chriſt, though I ſhould never have any benefit by Chriſt. Whatever he will do with me, as to my future ſtate, yet I am reſolved to be his Servant while I live. If I may not be a Saint in Heaven, yet I will be, as much as I can, a Saint on Earth. Holineſs is good, if I have never ſo ſmall a ſpark of it; 'tis a Beam of God, 'tis the Image of Chriſt: If I may not ſee God, nor dwell with Chriſt, yet I will get a little of him here; a little is better than none, though it ſhould laſt me but a little time. If I may not (behold his Face) in Righteouſneſs, yet I will do what I can to ſit at his Feet in Righteouſneſs, whatever he do with me. Ask any poor Chriſtian that is in his darkeſt

ſtate,

ſtate, whether this be not the ſtanding reſolution and purpoſe of his heart.

And is it not evident now, that whatever he thinks of himſelf, he ſtill cleaves unto Chriſt? The truth is, ſuch abiding workings of the heart towards Holineſs, are the ſouls cleaving to Chriſt; and it appears though he cannot ſee it himſelf, yet to Standers-by, that the root of the matter is ſtill in him; yea, and ſuch holy reſolutions in a dark ſtate, are ſtranger evidences of ſincerity, than the ſame reſolutions where they are encouraged by the higheſt ſenſible enjoyments. Certainly, there is more of evidence in it, to be able to ſay, though he Damn me, yet I will ſerve him, then there is in this, I will ſerve him becauſe he hath ſaved me. For mine own part, I ſhould have an higher confidence of a poor diſponding and even deſpairing Chriſtian that's bent upon Holineſs, than of many, whoſe Religion is animated and encouraged by raptures of Joy.

For the cloſe of this, e're I proceed farther, give me leave to put in a word of Exhortation; let me exhort you in the words of *Barnabas*, Act. 11. 23. *That with purpoſe of heart you will cleave unto the Lord.* Cleaving Notes,

Firmneſs,
Cloſeneſs,

1. *Be firm*; ſtick cloſe to Chriſt. Let it be with you as with the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 8. 38, 39. Let nothing ſeparate you from the love of God, which is in Chriſt Jeſus our Lord. Be ſure of this, that he will be with you whilſt you are with him, *Jam.* 4. 8. *Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh to you.* So may I ſay, ſtick faſt unto Chriſt, and he will ſtick faſt unto you: Chriſt is a ſure Friend, and he will ſtick by all his Friends that are faithful to him.

Conſider the three fore-mentioned caſes as Arguments to preſs this Exhortation. 1. You are in a Wilderneſs, and muſt expect troubles to come upon you. Your Faithfulneſs to Chriſt may coſt you dear; you may be forſaken of your Friends, you may fall into the hands of your Enemies; yet if ye will be Faithful to him, though all men forſake you, though evil men run upon you, yet Chriſt will ſtick to you. So he did to *Paul*, 2 Tim. 1. 16, 17. *No man ſtood with me, but all men forſook me, notwithſtanding the Lord ſtood by me and ſtrengthened, and I was delivered out of the mouth of the Lyon*; where we have 1. *The hard caſe he was, nd Chriſtians muſt look to be in.* 1. He was in the hands of Enemies, of great Men, who were examining him, and before whom he was to anſwer for his Life. Chriſtians may be brought before Rulers, and there Tryed for their Lives, and judged for Malefactors. 2. He was forſaken by his Friends, he had many Friends before; but when it came to the pinch, they all gave him the ſlip, and ſhrunk back, and ſtood aloof, and left him alone. Count upon this hard lot, and count it not ſtrange if it come to be your lot. 'Tis not ſo much to ſuffer in Company; as when any particular perſon is ſingled out, as a Deer from the Herd, and chaſed alone; the Hunters are upon him, and the Herd will not ſhelter him, but ſhift away from him. That's it you may look for, to be perſecuted by Enemies, and not to be owned by your Friends.

2. *His comfort in this his hard lot.* Though all Men forſook him, yet Chriſt ſtuck by him; the Lord ſtood with me, and ſtrengthened me. Chriſtians, this may be your caſe, and let this be your comfort, though none in the World ſhould own you yet ſtick by Chriſt, and he will ſtick by you in all your Tribulations.

2. Again

2. Again, you muſt dye; Sickneſs may Arreſt you, and caſt you upon the Bed of Languiſhing, and Death may ſtand at your Beds-feet, and ſtare you in the face, and the Grave will open its mouth for you, to ſwallow you up: Stick faſt to Chriſt, and look to find him ſtanding by your Beds-ſide to comfort you. O how will it be with you in that hour! O I feel my Diſeaſes and Languiſhing; my Fleſh waſteth, my Bones ake, my ſtrength is loſt, my heart faints, mine eyes fail, my breath is departing, and all tell me that Death is at the door, ready to turn me into rottenneſs: But O! where is my God? Now for a ſight of Chriſt! Thoſe that are gone back from Chriſt, they may look, and look, and cry, where is the Lord? where is the Saviour? But poor Wretches, there's no Chriſt to be ſeen. Death comes, and the Devil comes, and Sin comes, and puts a Sting into Death's tail, and the poor Sinner is left to grapple with Death alone; its gripes, its pangs, its terrors are upon him, but no Redeemer to be had. Whatever come upon thee, this ſhall not, thou that holdeſt thee by him, ſhalt ſee Jeſus ſtanding by thee; or if thou ſhould'ſt not ſee him, yet there he will not fail to be, though it may be, behind the Curtain, yet ready to help thee in thy Conflict with this thy laſt Enemy.

3. Yet again, after Death thou muſt be brought to Judgment, where thou wilt meet with a Righteous Judge, a Malicious Accuſer, who will have many things to lay to thy charge. All the ugly and frightful ſins that ever thou haſt done in thy life, thou maiſt look to hear of from that Malicious mouth. And how wilt thou ſtand before that dreadful Bar? O there thou ſhalt be ſure, *Even with theſe Eyes, to behold thy Redeemer*; there he will certainly be, for he is the Judge, and there he will ſtick by thee, for

he is thine Advocate; he hath ſaid to thee, *Rev.* 2. 10. *Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a Crown of life.* Fear not how thy matters ſhall go in the Judgment, I will be there, I will ſecure thee from coming into Condemnation. I will give thee the Crown of Life. This will be the Portion of thoſe that ſtick faſt to Chriſt, He will certainly ſtick to them; ſtick to them in all the troubles of their lives, ſtick to them in death, and ſtand by them in the eternal Judgment. O Chriſtans, ſtick faſt, hold faſt what you have, that no man take your Crown, *Rev.* 2. 11. Hold faſt your holy Profeſſion, hold on your Confidence and your holy Converſation, and thence-forth expect that Jeſus will give you a Crown of Life.

2. *Stick cloſe to Chriſt,* or elſe you will never be likely to ſtick faſt. By how much the cloſer our adherence to Chriſt is, by ſo much the firmer is our ſtanding, and the leſs danger of falling off. The root of a Tree, if it be looſned from the Earth, is more eaſily plucked up; it may be, ſome ſmall ſtrings there may be that keep their hold, which maintain it in life; but if the main root be looſned, it's the more in danger of being blown down. The cleaving of the ſoul to Chriſt, is ſet forth by the cleaving together of Husband and Wife; *Eph.* 5. 31. *For this cauſe, ſhall a Man leave Father and Mother, and ſhall be joyned to his Wife.* The word in the Original ſignifies, ſhall be glued to his Wife. What is glu'd together, if it ſhrinks or gapes, loſes its hold. Take heed of warping and ſhrinking from Chriſt, the glue will give off if you do, and when you have once loſt your hold, you know not whither you may be blown. O take heed of growing to a diſtance, of wandring from Chriſt, keep you near him if you would ſtand firm.

4. *A confirmed habit of Religion.* An holy diſpoſition and conſtitution of ſoul; this is the very heart of the new Creature; *the Divine Nature*, whereof Chriſtians are ſaid to be made partakers, 2 *Pet.* 1. 4. 'Tis an holy Spring or Fountain within us, which will flow forth in Religious actions; and by how much the more maturity it's ripened up into, by ſo much the more freely will it flow forth. An heart that is holily diſpoſed, and hath ſtrong and fixed inclinations Heaven-ward, will find Religion ſweet and eaſie to it, there will be the leſs need of force and conſtraint: That fear which is ſo neceſſary to drive on a ſervile ſpirit, will be of leſs uſe, according to the meaſures that we have attained of this free ſpirit, and ready mind: Such Chriſtians have that within them that will ſave them much of their labour and pains which would be otherwiſe needful. Our work will be eaſie, and we ſhall go on more proſperouſly in our way; we ſhall both more abound in the work of the Lord, and we ſhall go on more evenly and ſteadily in our courſe.

Religious acts, where there are no Religious habits, or where the habit is but weak, will be both more ſeldom and more difficult; and when they are done, whatever they be for the matter of them, yet it will be ſtill queſtioned whether they be ſincerely or ſavingly Religious. Thoſe that are carnally-minded, their very Natures do prompt them, and carry them on in their fleſhly ways; there's the leſs need of temptation to ſin, the Devil may ſave much of his labour, their ſinful diſpoſitions will carry them on faſt enough.

O Chriſtians, let this be in your eye, let this be it you aim at, and labour for, *to habituate* your ſelves to Holineſs; to get up to ſuch a ſettled holy diſpoſition, to ſuch a promptitude and readi-

neſs

neſs of mind, that your hearts may flow forth towards God and Godlineſs, that your inward ſtream may run Heaven-ward, that you may feel a freedom and enlargement of heart towards Godlineſs of Life.

Carnal Profeſſors, both thoſe that are wholly ſuch, and have nothing of the new Nature in them; and thoſe, who though they have ſomething of the Spirit, yet have much of the Fleſh remaining in them, O how heavily and ſlowly do they drive on in the matters of Religion! How backward are they to duty, how hardly brought to it, how quickly weary; they had rather be any where then with God, about any work, than about the work of the Lord; not only eating and drinking, and playing, and taking the pleaſures of the Fleſh, but their hardeſt fleſhly labours, Ploughing and Threſhing will eaſilier down with them, than Praying, or Holy Meditation, or otherwiſe Converſing with God: This is a wretched temper, but is it not an ordinary temper? Conſider, is it not thus with ſome of you that are Profeſſors of Religion? Conſult your own experiences; how freely, and how chearfully can you follow your Trades and worldly buſineſs; you can Work and Travail, and Buy and Sell, and follow it night and day; can riſe early, and go to Bed late, and eat the Bread of Careſulneſs, enduring heat and cold, and never complain; but when you come to Praying and communing with your own hearts, or taking a walk by Holy Meditation into the other VVorld; when you come to have to do in any of the matters of God, and ſerious Religion, O how like Drones and Sleepers do you go on? A little of this is enough, and more than you can well bear; your VVheels drug, your

Spirits

Spirits tire, and thereupon you haſtily over with this work, and are glad when you have done. How ſeldom is it that you go into your Cloſets as willingly as you come out? How well were it if you did as freely fall upon your knees, as you uſe to riſe from them when you have done?

How comes this to paſs? O you are yet carnal, carnally diſpoſed, carnally inclined; your fleſhly habits do diſpoſe you to your fleſhly ways, and fetter you, and hang on your heels when you ſhould be doing for God and your Souls. O to work Chriſtians, to work; work off theſe carnal diſpoſitions, and work up your hearts to Spirituality and Heavenlineſs. Get you to be better temper'd and better diſpoſed; and the way to habituate your ſelves to Religion, is to hold you cloſer to the exerciſe of Religion; if you would but uſe a little more force upon your ſelves for a time, and hold you to diligence in your Holy ways; this would by degrees, by the co-operation of the ſpirit of Grace with you, which you might boldly look for, to come into your help, this your forceing your ſelves upon a diligent holy life for a while, would bring you to go on after you had been inured to it, with more freedom and alacrity, *Heb.* 15. 14. Thoſe that were ſtrong Chriſtians, ſteady and eſtabliſhed Chriſtians, how came they to be ſo? O 'tis ſaid, *That by reaſon of uſe*, by *having their ſenſes exerciſed*, by this means they grew up to it. Friends, be perſwaded to make tryal; exerciſe your ſelves more to Godlineſs, uſe your ſelves to a ſtrict conſcientious Life: If you find it hard at firſt, yet force your ſelves upon it, hold your ſelves hard to it, and by that you have accuſtomed your ſelves to this courſe a while; look for it, you will find it

ſweet

ſweet and eaſie; and when you have thus gotten the habit of Religion, when by reaſon of uſe, and having your ſenſes exerciſed to Godlineſs, you become Holily diſpoſed and inclined, then what Chriſtians, think you, are you like to be; what thriving Chriſtians, what flouriſhing Chriſtians, what fruitful Chriſtians, are you then like to become! then your hearts will be ſtreaming hearts, and flaming hearts, and will mount up and aſcend in thoſe flames of holy Love and Zeal, above this Earth and Fleſh, and a Unity to live in the Light, and Love, and Joy of the Lord. O Friends, would you ſet your hearts to be reaching out towards this holy frame, would the Lord be pleaſed by the more abundant influences of his Spirit upon us, to work us up to, and ſettle us in this habit of Holineſs, this Spiritual, and willing, and ready mind, then we ſhould become a beautiful Congregation; then we ſhould become a bleſſed People, and ſhould grow up as Trees of Righteouſneſs, which the Lord hath Planted, and which the Lord hath Bleſſed.

What Friends, doth not all this ſtir you? Is there ſuch a Bleſſed ſtate and frame to be had, and is it not worthy your ſtriving after? Come my Beloved, let's beſtir our ſelves, let us follow after, let us be reaching on with our might to this holy Prize. Be not diſcouraged at difficulty, be doing, and the Lord will help you. VVe are workers together with God for you, be you workers together with us for your ſelves, ſet your hearts to it, and the Lord will work in you, both to will and to obtain of his good pleaſure.

And thus I have ſhew'd you what that ſolidity in Religion which I am ſtirring you up to, be

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reaching after, is, *to be well-grounded and ſettled in the ſubſtantials of Chriſtianity.* He that worſhippeth God in the Spirit, rejoyceth in Chriſt Jeſus, and heedfully ſhunning all Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, hath given himſelf to a Righteous, Sober, and Godly life; he that being deeply reſolved for Chriſt, and firmly truſting in Chriſt, doth with full purpoſe of heart, cleave unto him, ſticking faſt to the Lord, and keeping him cloſe by him, till he hath by reaſon of uſe, gotten Holineſs to be habitual to him: This is a Pattern that I would you would have much before your eyes.

4. *To fruitfulneſs in Religion.* There is a *readineſs* to good works, mentioned *Tit.* 3. 1. ſtanding in the preparation, or propenſion, or bent of the ſoul upon holy action, (whereof before) and there is a *fruitfulneſs* in good works, or the ſouls putting it forth in holy action.

All Religion ſtands in action, either the inward action of the Soul, or the outward action of the Life. 'Tis the doing Chriſtian that is the excellent Chriſtian, the fruitful field which hath a Bleſſing in it. There is amongſt our Corn ſome that looks freſh and ſtrong, and grows up ranker and taller than the reſt, but at beſt proves to have but little in the Ear, 'tis grown up all in Stalk, and hath little fruit; we can't ſay of it as *Hoſ.* 7. 8 *It hath no Stalk*; 'tis all Salk, and hath no Ear; 'tis the full Ears of the Field that are its fruitfulneſs.

That is fruitfulneſs where there is *good fruit* brought forth, and *much fruit*: That ground which either bringeth forth no good fruit, or but very little, we count barren ground. Will you call that a fruitful field which brings forth but here and there an Ear? a few handful of Ears to whole Sheaves

Sheaves of Tares and VVeeds? VVill you call that a fruitful Tree which hath but two or three Berrics in the top of the uppermoſt bough, four or five in the outmoſt fruitful branches? It is precious fruit, and plenty of it that will give us the account of fruitful Chriſtians.

Fruitfulneſs in Religion, is the Honour of Religion; *Herein is my Father Glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit*, Joh. 15 8. And what Glorifies God, God will make glorious before the VVorld. Barrenneſs is a Reproach; 'tis matter of ſorrow and ſhame: Such Chriſtians which ſtand as dry Trees, ſhould not ſtand with dry Eyes. VVe read that *Barren Wombs* have been the matter of great Affliction: How did *Sarah* and *Rachel* take on that they had no Children? And *Hannah*, when ſhe Prayed for a Child; having yet none, ſaid 1 *Sam.* 15. *I am a Woman of a ſorrowful ſpirit, out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I ſpoken.* But however it be upon the account of Barren Wombs, ſure a barren Soul ſhould be a mourning ſoul. Indeed 'tis too commonly ſo, that barren ſouls are uſually as barren of ſighs and tears, as they are of good fruit. You that are empty Vines, fruitleſs Fig-Trees, how ſeldom is it that you are upon your knees, bewailing your Barrenneſs?

The ſin of Barrenneſs is a provoking ſin. There are 3. ſuch words ſpoken againſt Barrenneſs in Religion, as (ſetting aſide the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt) there are not more terrible words ſpoken againſt any ſin. One word you have in the Parable againſt the barren Fig-tree, *Luk.* 13. 3. *Cut it down, why cumbreth it the ground.* Another word againſt another barren Fig-tree, *Matth* 21. 19. *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth, for ever.* A third word is againſt the barren ground, *Heb.* 6. 7, 8. *The Earth that drinketh in the Rain*

Rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth Herbs, meet for them by whom it is dreſſed, receiveth Bleſſing from God; but that which beareth Briers and Thorns, is rejected, and nigh unto Curſing, whoſe end is to be burned.

Methinks theſe words ſhould make ſome of your ſouls to tremble: Profeſſor, what art thou? a barren ſoul? a fruitleſs Fig-tree? O how canſt thou contain thy ſelf from fear? Is not thine heart terrified within thee, at the hearing the words of this Curſe? What if this word ſhould have been ſpoken to thee? *Cut this Man down, cut this Woman down, why cumber they the ground?* Or what if it ſhould be ſaid to thee, *Never fruit grow on thee for ever*; never a word of Grace proſper more with thee, live and dye a barren ſoul; would it not make thine heart ſhake? And are not theſe words ſpoken to thee? I hope not as an irreverſible Curſe; I hope that word is not gone forth againſt any of you, cut this Man down, never fruit grow on him for ever, let him wither, and periſh, and dye, and Burn for his Barrenneſs; yet if it be not ſo ſpoken, as *an irreverſible Curſe*, yet to thee it is ſpoken as a *terrible Warning*: Thus much of it doth belong particularly to thee, thou art *nigh unto Curſing*; and if thou look not the better to it, thine end will be to be burned.

Barrenneſs is a Reproach, Barrenneſs is an high Provocation; and fruitfulneſs is an Honour, and receiveth Bleſſing from God. Fruitfulneſs doth both ſpeak Chriſtians grown up to good maturity, and will advance them yet higher and higher. He that lays out moſt in his life, is ſtill laying up more in his heart; we gather by ſpending; the more we do, the more we have; no ſuch thriving and flouriſhing Chriſtians as the diligent doing Chriſtians. There's nothing gotten by holding in the Grace we have, and there's nothing loſt by laying it out. A good Man brings forth out of his

his Treaſure, and the more is brought forth, the more it increaſeth within. If ever you would make an increaſe in inward grace, let it put forth in vigorous exercise; no ſuch way to grow rich in Faith, as by being rich in good works; Faith without works dyes.

This now is a farther perfection of Religion, that I would preſs you to be reaching after, *fruitfulneſs* in Religion, or Holy action. Be not Hearers or Talkers, but doers of the Word, *Jam.* 1.25. *Who ſo looketh into the perfect Law of Liberty, and continueth therein, not being a forgetful Hearer, but a doer of the work, this Man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed.* Be doers of the work, and abound in the work of the Lord. That charge which the Apoſtle gives, 1 *Tim.* 6. 18, with a particular reſpect to works of Charity, receive it with reſpect to every good work; *Do good, be rich in good works, ready to diſtribute, willing to communicate, Laying up in ſtore for your ſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come.*

O my Brethren, ſet your hearts upon it, to do all the Honour you can to the Name and Goſpel of God, before the world. Wipe off that reproach of Barenneſs, by ſhewing your ſelves examples of fruitfulneſs. The world ſay in your reproach, and in the reproach of your God alſo, What is this Chriſtianity that is ſo much boaſted of, but a meer ſhaddow? What are theſe Profeſſors? what ever they talk, what do they more then others? Shew them what you do, which they will never do.

If you ask me what you ſhould do, 'tis too long to tell you the particulars of all your duty; take the Apoſtles anſwer, *Phil.* 4. 8. *Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report,---theſe things do, and the God of peace ſhall be with you.*

One

One Particular I ſhall inſtance in, (and but in a word here, intending to ſpeak more largely of it afterwards) do all you can that more immediately tends to the propagating of Religion in thoſe that have none. Be buſie in your Families to propagate religion there: I am willing to take all occaſions to inculcate this Duty, in regard that to the grief of my Soul I find, that after my ſo often preſſing of it there is ſtill ſo great a neglect even among ſome high Profeſſors of Chriſtianity. O Friends, if ye will do any thing for God, be doing amongſt your own; inſtruct them, teach them the way of the Lord, perſwade and provoke them to Chriſt: Let Religion be the top care and top buſineſs of your houſes. Do what you can to make Chriſtians of your Children and Servants; and this not ſo ſeldom, or ſparely, or heartleſly, as ſome do, now a little, and a long time after never a word; but be conſtant, be inſtant with all yours to bring them to God, that there may be a face of ſerious Religion appearing upon your whole Families, that a Spirit of Religion may be the very temper and conſtitution of your houſes. Some Profeſſors, what ever they be when amongſt other Profeſſors, how much ſoever of Religion there appears then, yet come into their houſes, and there's no more to be ſeen or heard of God than in the Family of thoſe that make no profeſſion; there's ignorance, and carnality, and vanity, and barrenneſs, and unſavoryneſs, and emptineſs of all that's good. You that come hither to the Ordinances to kindle religion in your own hearts, to fetch holy fire from the Altar, what you get here carry it home to your houſes, inſtill it into the hearts of your Children and Servants: Here your holy activity muſt begin; he that is not buſily doing for God with his own, is never like to do much good to others.

Next, endeavour to propagate Religion among your Neighbours and Acquaintance; eſpecially be doing good one to another, Chriſtians to Chriſtians; ſpeak often one to another, as they did, *Mal.* 3. 16. ſpeak to the hearts, and lay hold on the hands one of another, and ſtir up and lead one another in the ways of the Lord.

Friends, I would fain revive and ſet on foot that Chriſtian Practice of *Fruitfulneſs in Holy Communication* or diſcourſe among you: Good words are none of the leaſt of our good works. This one thing would much conduce both to the recovering that of religion which is loſt, and to the filling up that which is wanting in our ſelves or others. This hath been in uſe amongſt ſome of you, but is it not much fallen and forgotten? Do not many of you that are Profeſſors converſe together as carnally and as unprofitably as men that have no religion in them? This is a great ſhame and ſad conſequence; and Religion, which is now ſo much fallen in the World, is never like much to riſe till this holy practice be revived.

You are all ready enough to complain what decays there are in Religion, but are you willing to help towards its recovery? We have helped one another down ſadly, we have conſumed one another by our own coldneſs; will you help to recover one another, to warm and to quicken one another, as you have helped to cool and to deaden?

By this means you will mutually have the benefit of each others graces and experiences; your graces will hereby in a ſort become their graces, and their graces become yours: Your candle may light your Brethrens candles, at leaſt you may give light to thoſe that are round about you; but of this more afterwards.

I cannot enlarge further upon the ſeveral ways wherein your religious activity ſhould be exerciſed, you muſt take theſe hints: in general Labour to be doing Chriſtians, diligent buſie Chriſtians, ready to every good work, and fruitful in every good work: Have an eye upon, and be reaching to, this active life; hide not your Talent in a Napkin, put not your Candle under a Buſhel, keep not your Religion to your ſelves, your Knowledge, your Graces, your Experiences to your ſelves: Hath the Lord lighted up a Candle in your Hearts? let your light ſhine before men that may ſee your good works, and glorifie your Father which is in Heaven.

5. *To evenneſs and equality both of temper and courſe:* Evenneſs of temper is an argument of health and ſtrength; they are the weakly bodies that are apt to change with every change of Air or Weather, and they are but weakly Souls whom every change of their circumſtances puts out of frame.

This *even frame* muſt and will ſhew it ſelf in an *evenneſs of the courſe.* 'Tis an holy *life* that Chriſtians muſt live, and not ſatisfie themſelves with ſometimes an holy duty or day: There muſt not be only ſome drops of Religion ſprinkled here and there upon their paths, but their life muſt be an holy ſtream, and the ſtream muſt be conſtantly running towards God and Heaven. They muſt *run a Race* thitherward, *Heb.* 12. 2. He that runs a race keeps on his way ſtep by ſtep in a continued motion: We muſt neither turn aſide, nor go uncertainly on, ſometimes running, and ſometimes but creeping or ſtanding ſtill; we muſt keep our way and keep our pace; we muſt not go jumping heavenward, doing ſomething of our duty, and jumping over others, we muſt take all along in order as we go.

Chriſtians, it may be by the grace already obtained there's ſomething done in Religion at times, but how many duties do ye jump over and let them alone? Sometimes you will pray, and ſometimes you will jump over your praying ſeaſons: Sometimes you will perform works of piety, but you will jump over works of righteouſneſs and mercy. Sometimes you will be ſerious and ſavoury, and then you will leap out into lightneſs and vanity. Sometimes you will take a leap to Heaven in your retirements to converſe with God, and then you will leap down again into the mud and mire. Sometimes you will have ſome holy fits, and then your proud fits or froward fits. Sometimes ye run, and then ſtand ſtill; diligent for a ſtart, and then grow reſty and idle who knows how long after.

It is uncomfortable to conſider, how much this is the Religion of the moſt of Profeſſors; their Religion like a Feaver comes by fits only, as if it were rather their diſtemper than their temper; 'tis but here and there a little ſprinkling, ſome few drops fall that have any holy ſavour and tendency. Our ſtream, our ſtream! O how, and which way does it run! Sure you had gotten much higher if you had been more conſtantly riſing upwards. But whilſt there are ſuch riſings and falls, ſuch goings on and ſtandings ſtill, or turnings aſide; whilſt you are ſuch working and loytering Souls, no wonder it is ſo low with you as it is.

Know every one of you, that this in and out courſe is an argument that yet you have but little, and will never come to much, if it do not come to juſt nothing at laſt. Now and then a ſtrait ſtep with ſo many ſteps awry; is this ever like to bring you to Heaven? You are travelling up the Hill, but when will ye get you higher, if as one foot ſteps forward the other ſlides back.

back. This uncertain unequal going on only as the fit comes, 'tis an eaſie kind of Religion, if it were but ſound: But how can you think your ſelves ſound where you are ſo divided betwixt ſomething and nothing? An intermitting Pulſe is dangerous if not deadly.

Friends, would you prove your ſelves to be Chriſtians indeed? would you not that both you and your Religion ſhould prove to be as the chaff before the wind? And when the Lord ſhall come to purge his floor, would you not that both your ſouls and your hopes ſhould be blown away as the Chaff, and burn with the chaff in unquenchable fire? would you make it evident that your Religion is not Irreligion, and your Chriſtianity Hypocriſie? Then get you up to a more fixed ſpiritual temper, and hold you on in a more even and continued courſe; this will prove you to be Chriſtians both in truth and of growth; and hereby you will be making an advance higher and higher, till you ſhall have perfected holineſs in the fear of God: That's the mark that ſtands at the top of the Mount, which I would, after all that I have ſaid, you ſhould have chiefly in your eye, (perfection of Holineſs) and be with your might reaching towards.

For the cloſe of this, you now ſee what that pitch of Religion is that I am preſſing you to, even the higheſt pitch that is poſſibly attainable. You ſee your way before you is an *uphill way*: You that are yet but at the foot of the Mount, ſtay not where you are, but get you up by the riſing ground till you come to the top: Do not now ſtand deſponding at the height of the Hill, and the ſteepneſs of its paſſage; do not ſtand complaining of the difficulty of attaining; ſay not within your ſelves, I cannot get on, I cannot get me up to this holy, ſpiritual, fruitful, ſteady

frame and life; with all my ſoul I would, but O I cannot, I ſtick ſtill here below, I am among the pooreſt, and weakeſt, and hindermoſt of the Flock; and after all my waiting and hoping to get to this holineſs and fruitfulneſs, behold here am I in this lower ground to this day: A Chriſtian I hope I am, but ſure a very mean Chriſtian, a lame and very weakly Chriſtian: God help me, there's but little ſign that I have been a Profeſſor ſo long, a Believer ſo long; I ſee I have hitherto gotten but very little ground, and O how little hope is there I ſhould ever get thorow! Do not ſtand complaining thus, I often give you warning to take heed of this folly, becauſe I doubt it to be ordinarily a caſe with very many, who finding their complaints to give them a little eaſe for the time, do thence count them to be the cure of their diſeaſes. Complain if ye will, and as much as you ſee cauſe, but let it be in order to the quickning you to diligence, and not either to eaſe you in your ſloth, or to diſcourage you from your duty.

And thus I have at length diſpatch'd the firſt General, *What 'tis to ſtir up our ſelves in Religion*; having ſhew'd both by what acts, and to what pitch of religion we ſhould ſtir up our ſelves.

2. *What need there is of ſtirring up our ſelves to and in Religion.* And here I ſhall not ſpeak to the particular caſes of the unconverted, of the weak, and backſliding Chriſtians, *diſtinctly* and apart, but ſhall ſpeak promiſcuouſly to them as they fall in my way.

Do you ask then what need there is of ſtirring up our ſelves?

I anſwer: It will appear there is need enough if we conſider theſe two things.

1. *Thoſe that fall ſhort of Religion, or carefully maintain not that Religion they have, will be loſt at laſt.*

2. *Thoſe*

2. *Thoſe that ſtir not up themſelves are never like to attain Religion, or to maintain that little they have.*

1. *Thoſe that fall ſhort of Religion, of true and ſound Religion, or that carefully maintain not that Religion they have, will be loſt at laſt.* Without religion we cannot be ſaved, without regeneration, which is the beginning of religion; or without ſanctification, which is our progreſs in Religion; without perſeverance in religion we cannot be ſaved, *Joh.* 3. 3. *Heb.* 12. 14. *Rev.* 2. 10. particularly.

1. *Sinners that live and dye in their ſins, there's no queſtion concerning them, whither they go, they muſt all go to the Devil.* Thoſe that have no religion, that have not taken up ſo much as the profeſſion of ſerious Chriſtianity, and ſo live and dye; there's as much hope of the ſalvation of the Devil as of them. You that ſerve the Devil, and continue to live under the power of the Devil, you ſhall never come to Heaven unleſs the Devil himſelf be admitted to meet you there: As you have lived with the Devil here, ſo he and you muſt be together at the ſame place for ever; and whatever your hopes and talks are of being ſaved by Chriſt, it cannot be. I muſt tell you, you that come not to Chriſt, and will be none of his Diſciples, you ſhall have no more benefit by the bloud of Chriſt than the Devils ſhall have, and that's none at all. Without ſound Chriſtianity you have no part in Chriſt, and without a part in Chriſt you can have no Salvation.

2. *Yea and thoſe that are come ſo far on to Chriſt as to take on them the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity, if they dye Hypocrites, will be alſo certainly loſt.* Thoſe that are come off from the drunkards, and adulterers, and ſcoffers, and total ſlighters of Chriſt, and have viſibly joyned themſelves to the Diſciples of Chriſt, joyn'd

in prayer, and hearing, and ſacraments with them; how much ſoever they ſeem to have of the external fruit and appearance of Religion, how commendable and hopeful ſoever their profeſſion hath been, if Chriſt and Chriſtianity be not rooted in their hearts, even theſe alſo, after all their hopes and profeſſion, will be loſt at laſt: Hypocrites will have the ſame lot at laſt with Infidels and final Impenitents.

3. *Yea and thoſe that have ſincere religion, if they look not diligently to it, will loſe all the religion they have.* Whatever ſecurity there be for the Saints perſeverance in religion to the end, there's no ſecurity at all, but they will certainly fall off and periſh, *if they neglect the means of their perſeverance.* And thoſe that are but Children in religion, or are fallen to decay, are backſliders in religion, can never prove to themſelves that they are not Hypocrites, and ſo can never be ſecure or have any aſſurance, but they alſo will be loſt in the end.

2. *Thoſe that ſtir not up themſelves, are never like to attain to religion or to proſper in it, yea to maintain that little which any of them have.*

All this will be made evident.

1. *From the diſtance we are at, the moſt of us, from ſound and proſperous religion.*

2. *From the difficulty of recovering thoſe that are fallen.*

3. *From the difficulty of holding on for thoſe that ſtand.*

1. *From the great diſtance we are at ſome of us from ſound and proſperous religion.* There is as great a diſtance betwixt unconverted Sinners and Saints, as betwixt Heaven and Earth, betwixt Life and Death, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. *We know that we are paſſed from death to life*; that is, from being Sinners to Saints: There is

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as much difference betwixt the ſtate of theſe, as betwixt the living and the dead.

And there is, though not ſo great, yet a very great diſtance, betwixt the loweſt and unthriving ſort of Chriſtians, and flouriſhing Chriſtians; betwixt thoſe that were ever but low and them, there is as much diſtance as betwixt a Child and a Man, betwixt a very poor man and a wealthy man: And betwixt backſliders and the proſperous is as much diſtance, as betwixt a languiſhing and dying man and a healthful. The diſtance betwixt backſliders and the proſperous is greater and more hardly reconciled, than of thoſe that are but Children: As you know a man that hath had a good trade and a good ſtock, but is broken and fallen to decay; there is leſs hope of his recovering and getting up again, than there is of the raiſing of a young beginner how ſmall ſoever his ſtock be.

That you may more fully underſtand how great the diſtance is betwixt what you are and what you ſhould be or might have been, I ſhall adviſe you to make this threefold compariſon.

1. Compare your ſelves with ſome of thoſe that are of your own time and ſtanding, yea with ſome that came in to Chriſt many years ſince ſome of you. O how far are you left behind ſome of your company! Yea how much have ſome younger Chriſtians gotten the ſtart of you! What fruitful Chriſtians, what lively Chriſtians, what experienced Chriſtians are there, which never had half the time that ſome of you have had! Whilſt they are ſhut up and become tall as the Cedars in *Lebanon*, do not you continue as the underwood poor ſtarveling Shrubs that proſper not? What a diſtance is there betwixt a Shrub and a grown Tree! When do ye think ye ſhall reach to their growth, if ye do not ſtir up your ſelves to come on at another

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rate then hitherto you have done? O let it not ſuffice you that ye have hope that ye are Chriſtians, but get you on to be with the foremoſt of your company; the top branches are the beſt.

2. Compare your ſelves with your ſelves, what you are now, with what you were in your former time: Are you as good as ever you were? as holy as ever you were? or is there not a fall and a great fall from what you once had attained to? Is not the Sun gone many degrees back with you? Is not much of your light, and your life, and your heat loſt? Where be your eyes, Friends, if you do not ſee what loſers you are? where be your ſenſes, if you do not feel your own decays? Sure 'tis a ſad ſign that you have even loſt all your Chriſtianity, if you have not ſo much of Chriſtianity left as to make you ſenſible how much you have loſt. You that are backſliding Souls, my preaching to you is like to be in vain; I have little hope that this word ſhould do any thing towards your recovery, if it doth not make you ſenſible how much you have loſt, and how far you are grown behind hand. This would be hopeful, if we could ſee you ſmiting on your thighs as once *Ephraim* did, *Iſ.* 31. 19. Or ſmiting on your Breaſt as the poor Publican did, *Lord be merciful to me a ſinner*; Lord be merciful to me a backſlider, Lord pardon me, Lord receive me, Lord recover me and help me up, that I utterly loſe not that which I have wrought. Know, friends, that if ye be fallen to ſuch a diſtance from what you once were, you are at a greater diſtance from what you ſhould be. For,

3. Compare your ſelves with that Copy which I have ſet before you, to be preſſing towards; with that higher pitch of Religion which I have pointed out unto you in the 5 particulars formerly mentioned. Compare your ſelves with theſe, and then how great

will

will the diſtance appear to be betwixt what you are and what you ſhould be? Are you ſuch hungry and thirſty Souls after the higheſt degree of Religion? Have you panting hearts, longing hearts, can you ſay, my Soul is athirſt for God, mine heart cryeth out for the living God, O for more of God, for more of the holy Image of God, more of the Life of God, for more of the power of his Grace? Are your Souls ſuch hungring and thirſting Souls, or have you not even loſt your appetites, doth not even deſire fail with you? And then what ſavour or reliſh have you of religion in your hearts? Is wiſdom entred into your hearts, is the knowledge and grace of God become [pleaſant] to your Souls? Do you taſte the ſweetneſs of religion? Can you ſay with the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* 84. 1. *How amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord?* Or as *Pſ.* 19. 10. *Sweeter than the honey or the honey-comb* to my Soul; thy Teſtimonies are my delight, how precious are thy thoughts to me! A day in thy Courts, an hour in my Cloſet, my Retirements to the Lord, and my Soul ſolaces in the ſecret of his preſence; theſe are the great pleaſures of my life, and the very joy of mine heart: Can you ſay ſo? do you find it ſo? Lord, how ſhort, how far ſhort do the moſt of Profeſſors fall here! Ah wretched hearts! We have taſted ſo much of the ſweetneſs of this Earth, that we have loſt our taſte of God; *the world* is become too ſweet; our gains, and our pleaſures, and our very labours are too ſweet; theſe carnal things put our mouths out of reliſh of things ſpiritual and heavenly.

And thus I might lead you through all the Particulars, Solidity, *&c.* by comparing your ſelves wherewith, you might eaſily perceive how very great the diſtance is from that holy, heavenly, tender, fruitful frame which we ſhould be in. And ſure,

Friends,

Friends, ſuch a great diſtance from it makes it evident how much need we have to ſtir up our ſelves, to be reaching and making towards it, *Phil.* 3. 12. *Not as if I had already attained or were already perfect, but I follow after.* The Apoſtles ſenſe, that he was ſhort of perfection, this was it to ſtir him up to follow after: And O how hard does he follow? *v.* 13. *Forgetting what's behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things that are before, I preſs to the mark.* O if it were thus with this great Apoſtle one that had out-ſtripp'd even the reſt of the Apoſtles, and was gotten ſo much nearer to the mark than they all: If this thought, but I am yet ſhort, I have not yet attained, did ſo preſs him to follow after, then ſure our ſenſe how greatly we fall ſhort of him, who yet acknowledged himſelf ſhort of the mark, does evidence how great need we have to beſtir our ſelves.

Do not now think that a little amendment will ſerve your turns, that a little more care and pains will ſuffice to help you up and recover you; know that you have a great way to go ere you can attain to this proſperous ſtate, and if ever you do recover to it, it muſt coſt you much; many an importunate Prayer, great watchfulneſs, much labour, yea many ſorrows of heart for your neglects that have been; many a ſigh, and may be many a tear: And therefore much need is there that you ſtir up and awaken your ſleepy hearts to it. Fall upon your knees, fall upon your knees, bemoan your ſelves, be aſhamed of your ſelves that you have ſloth'd your ſelves to this ſad paſs, and then ſtir up your ſelves to make after a recovery.

2. *From the difficulty of recovering them that are fallen.* It is with the conſumption of the heart as with the conſumption of the body; there are 3 degrees of a conſumption.

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In the firſt degree it's *hard to be diſcern'd and eaſily cured*. If this Diſeaſe be but taken in the beginning, a little matter might do the cure; but in our firſt declinings it is not eaſie to diſcern them: Conſumptions come not as Feavers with any violence, but we waſte and waſte by degrees; it doth not make men ſick at firſt ſeizing them, but they conſume away inſenſibly: May be ſome amongſt us have but begun to fall. A degree of declining there may be, but they are not ſick of it, but take themſelves to be healthful and ſtrong Chriſtians; a little while hence they may both ſee and feel, what they will not ſuſpect nor fear. If you would but underſtand in time, and ſeek remedy in time, how much miſchief and miſery might be prevented!

2. The 2*d*. degree is *eaſie to be diſcern'd, but hard to be cured*. The farther it grows upon us the more plain our caſe is, but the more difficult is our recovery. Friends, there is a Conſumption of the Vitals of Religion upon too many among us, and ſome are very far gone: There need not be much pains taken to give you the Symptoms or Signs by which you may know it; their backſlidings are ſo viſible, that they are manifeſt even to every eye. The paleneſs of ſome of our faces, the ſhortneſs of our breath, the waſting of our ſtrength, the unwildineſs and inability to labour, and the liſtleſneſs thereto diſcovers how 'tis with us. O what weak and liſtleſs ſouls are ſome of us! our fleſh and our bodies ſtrong and healthful, but how weak are our hearts, how ſhort breath'd, quickly tired with every little of duty? and how pale and wan doth our outward man appear, our very Vitals are periſhed and gone. Friend, thou hopeſt thou keepeſt thy ſtand, but is it indeed with thee as it was wont to be? Doſt thou pray, and hear, and live, and love, and labour in the matters of God, and of thy Soul,

Soul as in thy former days? Open thine eyes, and look a little upon thy ſelf, compare thy ſelf now with what thou waſt in thy beſt eſtate; and then thou wilt ſay of thy ſelf as God of *Ephraim*, *Hoſ.* 7. 9. *Gray hairs are upon me though I knew it not.* 'Tis conſpicuous, man, to every one that obſerves thee; thy Religion, thy conſcience, and all that Grace that is in thee, 'tis all grown gray: Gray hairs are upon thee, though thou mindeſt it not. What ſay you, Chriſtians, are you all freſh and flouriſhing? Are you ſtrong Chriſtians, lively Chriſtians? Do your Souls proſper, doth your Religion proſper? or muſt you not ſay, I remember the days of Old, when it was better with me than now? ſuch who are ſo far gone, whoſe decay is ſo viſible, though their recovery be poſſible, yet they are hard to be recovered.

3. A third degree is, *not to be hid and paſt cure, plain to be diſcovered, never to be cured:* and then the Conſumption of ſouls is ordinarily paſt cure, when men are *paſt feeling*. It is one thing to be *without feeling* in thoſe that never had any ſenſe of God upon them, and another to be *paſt feeling* in thoſe that once had ſome tenderneſs of heart: Thoſe that have been chilling, and cooling, and hardning ſo long, till God gives them over to that *reprobate ſenſe* mentioned, *Rom.* 1. 28. the caſe of ſuch men is become deſperate.

Now you that are fallen into this conſuming Diſeaſe, conſider theſe things, how difficult your caſe is, unleſs it be but in the very beginning, and how it will be growing on to be harder and harder, if yet you prevent it not with ſpeed till it becomes deſperate. Conſider this, and then ſay, if it be not time to look about you, and to make haſtily out to the Phyſician for cure. Friends take heed, will you yet linger on as you have done! will you be quiet, take your eaſe, and take no effectual care to recover the health

health you have loſt, the ſtrength you have loſt? Tremble to think how ſuddenly you may be given up to a total and final Apoſtaſie.

But why is the cure ſo difficult? Ianſwer:

1. *Becauſe* (as it hath been ſaid) *in the beginning it's ſo hard to be diſcerned.* Who will look after a cure that thinks he ails nothing? This Conſumption invades and creeps on by ſuch inſenſible degrees, that it is not perceived or minded till it grows up to ſuch an height as will ſcarce admit of a cure. This Conſumption fretteth out the Heart as a Moth fretteth a Garment. When the Moth firſt breeds, there it lies undiſcovered, till by inſenſible degrees it eats up the ſtrength of the Garment. If the Moth ſeized upon any Garment as fire doth, you would ſhake it off ſuddenly; but becauſe it conſumes but inſenſibly and by ſlower degrees, therefore it's let alone till it hath done its work. Friends, is there not a Conſumption upon you? is not the Moth gotten in? I hope not into my Soul. Why there's the miſery of it, you will not know you conſume till ye be utterly conſumed.

2. *From the indiſpoſition and unwillingneſs of the Heart to ſeek after a cure.* Such untowardneſs and indiſpoſition there is to this work, that I am afraid that by all that I can ſay, I ſhall not be able to prevail with ſome of you, to make tryal what may be done. May be you acknowledge that we have all need enough of this warning, but I am in much doubt that when you have heard all, your hearts will ſo hang back from the work, that all that can be ſaid will quickly be forgotten, and never effectually ſtir you. If you would take the warning, and ſtir up your hearts, and ſet to the work, there is hope you might be recovered; but I tell you again, eſpecially thoſe that are far gone, that I fear your unwilling and untoward

hearts

hearts will be too hard for the word, and will not let you come on to any purpoſe. Conſider what I ſay, and remember it a day or two hence, and ſee if it be not with too many of you according to my fears; and tell me then if you can, I thank the Lord, the word hath prevailed, and I have ſet mine heart to it, and through the Grace of God will not give over till I may ſee it effectually work to my recovery.

3. *From that oppoſition that is made againſt our recovery.*

1. *There is a ſtirring Devil that oppoſeth it.*

2. *There are ſtirring luſts that oppoſe our recovery.*

1. *There is a ſtirring Devil that oppoſes your recovery.* The Devil is a deſtroyer, that's his name, *Rev.* 9. 11. *Abaddon*, *Apollyon*, that is a Deſtroyer; 'tis he that hath brought you into this caſe, that hath deſtroyed that little Grace you had, and is thereby attempting to deſtroy your Souls. When you ſee what waſts have been made upon you, upon your conſciences, upon your comforts; 'tis the Devil that hath made theſe waſts, he is that Fox that hath devoured your Grapes. The Devil is an adverſary, and a buſie adverſary, 1 *Pet.* 5. 8. walking up and down, ſeeking to do you a miſchief; 'tis he that hath brought you down to this low paſs in which you are, and he that hath brought you down will do all he can to hinder you from ever riſing again: The Devil is with you whereſoever you are, he watches you where ever you go; if you go into your Cloſets, go to pray for recovery, the Devil watches you there, and does what he can to diſtract and hinder your prayers. When you come to hear, the Devil watches you in the Congregation, and ſtrives to catch away every word that might do you good. All theſe words which I am ſpeaking to you for your recovery, I am in doubt they may have but little ſucceſs; if the Devil can

help it, there ſhall none of them ſtick upon your hearts: He that hath brought you ſo low will be buſie with you to hold you ſo low, reſiſting and ſtealing away whatever word might help you up. What's become of all the words that have been hitherto ſpoken to this purpoſe, do they abide upon you? have they wrought a cure upon any languiſhing Souls? or what's become of them all? O hath not this adverſarie ſtolen them all away, ſtolen away the warnings, ſtolen away the reproofs, ſtolen away the awakening counſels that have been given you, and ſo hitherto held your Souls faſt aſleep? Now having to do with ſuch a buſie and ſtirring Devil, you had need the more to beſtir your ſelves and look about you, that he do not irrecoverably undo you. *Reſiſt the Devil*, Jam. 4. 7. *Be ſober, be vigelant*, 1 Pet. 5. 8. knowing that your adverſary.---- Is he ſo watchful upon you to hinder you and miſchief you? does he lye at the catch to ſteal away this awakening word from you? You had need lye at the catch alſo, catch at every word the Lord ſpeaks to you concerning this matter, lay hold upon them, lay them up in your hearts, forget them not while you live, keep them in memory, let them dwell in you, and hold your thoughts upon them; keep them working in your hearts, and never let them ſlip till they have done the work and your Souls be recovered.

2. *There are ſtirring luſts within you that oppoſe your recovery.* Your luſts are your diſeaſe, and your diſeaſe reſiſts your remedy. There is *a body of Sin* within you, there's the ſame evil nature in you that are Chriſtians that there is in Sinners; though the power of ſin be broken, yet there is much of it ſtill remaining. Though the *Egyptians* be drowned, Sin as *a Throne* be ſubdued, yet the *Canaanite*, Sin as *a Thorn*, is ſtill in the Land. Though Chriſtians have not an E-

Enemy to which they are in bondage, yet they have an Enemy that's ſtill fighting againſt their Souls; ſin hath no longer dominion over them, *Rom.* 6. 14. yet it ſtill makes war upon them. Though the head of this Serpent be broken, yet 'tis a Serpent ſtill: And as 'tis ſaid of *Daniel*, Gen. 49. 17. It is *a Serpent in the (way,) an Adder in the (path,) it biteth the Horſe heels*; it wounds, and vexes, and hinders, though it cannot kill. This Sin is called *a Body of Sin*, Rom. 6. 6. and of this Body there are many members, every luſt of our heart is a Member of our Body of Sin. Our evil nature is this Body, and there our numerous Luſts do meet as in their common root, and thence they ſpring. Now theſe Luſts are they that hinder and ſpoil us.

Friends, theſe are they that have tempted you off from God, and tempted you off from your integrity, and turn'd you to iniquity, and hitherto hindred your returning. *Jam.* 1. 14. *Every man when he is tempted, is drawn aſide of his own luſt and enticed.* Do not think to lay all the blame upon the Devil, and ſo to excuſe your ſelves; no, your own hearts have joyned with the Devil, you have been acceſſary to your own ruine. Some men when they have run themſelves out of their Eſtates by Riot and Drunkenneſs, they will think to lay all the blame upon their evil company: O this evil company, this evil company have been my Bane, ſure enough they have; and therefore let every wiſe man be warned and ſhun them as the Devil. But yet, let not evil company bear all the blame, 'tis that evil heart of thine, thine own hearts luſt that betrayed thee into thy evil company: What could evil company have done hadſt thou not had an evil heart to go after them? How long might they have enticed thee and never prevailed, if thou hadſt not been drawn aſide by thine own hearts luſt and enticed?

ted? They are thoſe Devils within you, thoſe Luſts that war in your Members, that have given the Devil his advantages againſt you. Some fall a luſting after Money, and this luſt ſets them ſo hard on work for the world, keeps them ſo buſie about their Trades and their Eſtates, that they forget God and their Souls. Others luſt after Pleaſures, and eaſe, and idleneſs, and this keeps them off from thoſe labours and that induſtry which is neceſſary to the maintaining their Souls in life. Some luſt to Pride, others to Envy, others to frowardneſs and contention, and thoſe make ſuch gaſhes in their Hearts, as let out the life bloud of all their Religion. 'Tis mens luſts that bring their Souls down, and do devour and eat up all their Religion: and as I ſaid before of the Devil, ſo here of Luſt, that which hath brought them down will hinder their riſing.

And theſe Luſts are ſtirring Luſts, working and warring in our Members, holding us in captivity to the Law of Sin, as *Rom.* 7. 23. and hindering our recovery and redemption. *When I would do good, evil is preſent with me*, v. 21. that is, to hinder and hold me back from doing any thing that would do me good: And as it was with the Apoſtle, ſo is it more or leſs with every Chriſtian. May we not all ſay after him? *When I would do good, evil is preſent with me.* Luſt is buſie, luſt ſtands ready to ſpoil me in every duty. Whatever *calls* we have to duty, to repent, and return to the Lord, to pray and cry unto the Lord: Though the Word calls, remember whence you are fallen, and repent; though Conſcience calls, ſeek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is nigh. Luſt ſtrikes in to ſtop or turn away our Ears from theſe Calls. Why is it that no more of you have anſwered theſe Calls? Remember whence you are fallen, and repent. O 'tis your Luſts that have

ſtopp'd your ears. Whatever *need or neceſſity* there be lying upon us to hearken to theſe calls, though we ſee all the good that is within us even at deaths door, graces dying, comforts dying, hopes dying, and all our Religion ready to give up the ghoſt, yet our Luſts will not ſuffer us to mind our Neceſſities. Whatever *inclinations*, or *deſires*, or *purpoſes* we have to make an eſcape, to ſeek a remedy for theſe our diſeaſed languiſhing Souls; whatever *offers* and *attempts* we make to ſet upon more earneſt praying and crying to the Lord for help and deliverance, to ſet upon a more watchful diligent life; whatever good it be we purpoſe or ſet our ſelves upon, ſtill evill is preſent with us; one luſt or other is ſtill at hand to ſpoil or hinder all, ſo that we cannot do the things that we would, *Gall.* 5. 17. We think to come to it, we hope to come to it while the word is preaching to us, and our hearts are a little touched and affected with it; whilſt we are made to ſtand convinced in our own particulars; *This decayed ſtate is evidently my ſtate: and it is an evil and wretched, and dangerous ſtate*, and thereupon we take up ſuch thoughts, Well through the grace of God I will amend, I will no longer go on thus, I will ſeek my recovery; yet ſtill Luſt ſtrikes in and fights againſt all ſuch thoughts, ſo that we cannot do the things that we would. Chriſtians, do you not find it thus in your experiences? One luſt or other is perpetually riſing up to hinder any good that's going in your hearts, and bringing it to juſt nothing. O how many good motions are quenched, good purpoſes vacated, good deſires and hopes fruſtrated, good beginnings diſcouraged; your duties ſpoiled, your peace broken, your comforts clouded and loſt, and all by the malign influences of the Body of ſin, and the impetuouſneſs of your luſts its members? Here are thoſe outcries that we ſometimes hear from the tender-

tender-hearted; wo is me that I am conſtrained to dwell in *Meſech*, to have my habitation in the Tents of *Kedar*; I am for peace, but they are for war. I am for peace, yet not by a League, but by a conqueſt of mine Enemies, let them dye that I may be at reſt; but ſtill they live and are mighty, whilſt I am for peace they are for war: I can have no reſt in my Spirit, I am weary of my life, becauſe of theſe Daughters of *Heth*: Wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me? Hear Lord, cut down, caſt out theſe Sons of the Bond-woman, that they be no longer a Plague or a Snare unto me. Remember theſe Children of *Edom* in the day of *Jeruſalem*; happy ſhould I be could I reward them as they have ſerved me; happy ſhould I be if I could take theſe Children and daſh them againſt the ſtones.

And now you ſee another ground why you have great need to beſtir your ſelves becauſe of theſe ſtirring luſts that hinder and miſchief you.

Let me here put in a word of application. You will ſay, But what ſhould the conſideration of theſe ſtirring luſts ſtir me up unto? Why, you have it hinted to you already, to deal by them as they have dealt and will deal by you: Have they given you a fall? wreſtle with them again, till they fall before you: Are they for war? let them have enough of it, war againſt thoſe luſts that war againſt your Souls: Doth the Fleſh luſt againſt the Spirit? let the Spirit luſt againſt the Fleſh. Stretch forth the Spear, and draw not back your hand till they become as the *Midianites* which periſhed at *Endor*, and became as the Dung of the Earth. Mortifie, mortifie them; as luſt hath even mortified your Religion, ſo let your Religion mortifie Corruption. Take the Apoſtle for your Patern: O how did that great Apoſtle *Paul* beſtir himſelf upon this account! what compaſſio-

nate complaints did he make againſt his luſt, *Rom.* 7. aforementioned? The good that I would I do not, the evil that I hate that do I; when I would do good, evil is preſent with me: I find a law in my members warring againſt the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of ſin. Wretched man that I am, who ſhall deliver me from the body of this death! What earneſt prayers did he make? For this *I beſought the Lord thrice*, 2 *Cor.* 12. 8. I was often upon my knees, begging the Lord that theſe Thorns in my fleſh might be pulled out. What aſſaults and batteries did he make upon them, 1 *Cor.* 9. 26, 27. *So fight I, not as one that beateth the Air, but I keep under my body and bring it to ſubjection, leſt that by any means, when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould become a Caſt away.* What will become of me if I let theſe Luſts live? O they will damn me at laſt. After all my preaching of Chriſt to others, I ſhall be a Reprobate from Chriſt, a Caſt away, if I conquer not mine own ſins; one of the two, they or I muſt die. *Paul* was a choſen Veſſel, and by the Election of God ſecured from coming into condemnation; but this neceſſary means muſt be uſed, his ſins muſt be ſlain, or his ſoul cannot be ſaved, *Acts* 27. 31. Though God had promiſed him his life, and the lives of all in the Ship; yet, ſays he, unleſs the Mariners abide in the Ship ye cannot be ſaved. And in the caſe of *Jonah*, if *Jonah* had not been caſt out of the Ship, the Mariners had all been drowned.

Friends, how often muſt I tell you this? Whatever Faith and Hope in Chriſt you have, whatever profeſſion of Chriſt you have made, whatever ſecurity you think you have for your Salvation, yet if theſe *Jonahs* be not caſt over board, you will all be drowned in perdition and deſtruction, your luſts will never leave enticing and tempting you from one ſin to another,

ther, from one degree of Apoſtaſie to another, till they have damned your Souls: If you give them Rope and let them alone, they will become ſuch a Rope about your Neck as will drag you to the Pit.

How near have they brought you to it already? are not ſome of you even become as dying men? have not your ſouls and your hopes one foot in the Grave? And if you die thus daily, what can you expect but to be buried in flames? See what your luſts have already done, and tremble to think what they are ſtill a doing; you die outright if you ſave them alive. And will you not yet ſtir? have they eaten up your hearts, and drunk up your ſpirits, and left ſuch leanneſs upon your ſouls? Have they withered your branches, and rotted your fruit, and are theſe worms ſtill gnawing at your root? How can you but cry out, Lord what am I come to? Lord whether am I falling? ſave Lord, or I periſh. Ariſe, O my Soul, cut off the Limbs, and ſmite through the Loyns of the Old Man; nothing but his Death can ſecure his Life.

Friends, how do theſe words take with you? what do they work? what nothing moved for all this? Or do the Sleepers begin to wake? O that it might be ſo! Lord waken them.

3. *From the difficulty of holding on, and getting on the way, for thoſe that ſtand.* It's hard to keep our way, and much more to make ſpeed on in it; and ſo hard, that unleſs we beſtir our ſelves to purpoſe, we ſhall never come roundly on. The way of Religion is an *uphill-way*, Prov. 15. 24. *The way of life is above to the Wiſe, to depart from Hell beneath.* The Mark we are making toward, ſtands upon a Hill; there the City of God (in which alone that perfection we are reaching after is to be found) is ſituate: *The Holy*

Hill of Zion, Jeruſalem *which is above*. Our Mark we are preſſing to ſtands upon an Hill, and our way to it is all riſing ground, and if we put not our ſelves hard to it we ſhall never get up.

Sinners are all running downward, and therefore 'tis they run ſo faſt: Behold how the whole herd of Sinners are all like that herd of ſwine of the *Gaderens*, running headlong down, and never like to ſtop till they be choked and drowned in the Lake of Fire and Brimſtone; and the ſame way are Backſliders running, theſe alſo are running down after the herd of Swine.

But now a Chriſtians way is upwards; as 'tis ſaid, *Eccl.* 3. 21. the Spirit of a Man, ſo much more the Spirit of a Chriſtian, aſcends and goes upwards; he does ſo when he dies as the meaning there is, and he muſt do ſo while he lives, that's his duty, *Col.* 3. 1. and his duty is his way that he ſhould go; his courſe is to be from bad to good, and from good to better; from weakneſs to ſtrength, yea, and from ſtrength to ſtrength; from a little to an increaſe of ſtrength. Chriſtians, you are all bound for Heaven, Travellers to the Holy Hill; your progreſs in holineſs is your aſcending and climbing up the Hill; you are getting up the *Jacobs* Ladder which reaches the Hill-top. Every Holy Day you live, every Holy Duty you perform, every little degree of Grace that's added to you, is your getting up ſo many rounds higher upon that Holy Ladder: And this is it you have to do, to be climbing and climbing, higher and higher, in the Grace of God, and in the Works of Grace.

And this now is the reaſon of our ſo ſlow motion; he that goes up the Hill takes the more time, and the ſhorter ſteps; yea and as one foot goes up the other ſlides back. Our goings up at Hill are more painful;

painful; *Facilis deſcenſus----at revocare gradum----hic labor, hoc opus eſt.*

And hence is it, that there is ſo much need of the Goad and the Spur to prick us on. Down at hill there's more need of the Bridle than of the Spur. Even Chriſtians have need of the bridle in this reſpect; we need not be driven down to the lower Valleys which we have left, we are too apt to be running back to the gains and the pleaſures here below; 'tis to haſten our motion upward, that we ſo much need the Rod and the Spur.

Yea, and we need to be quickned and warned to look well to the Bridle, to reſtrain us from our croſs and contrary motions: Sure, Friends, our ſo eager running ſtill after this world, running after the riches and pleaſures of this life, evidence it ſufficiently what need we have to be ſtirred up to look well to the Bridle: As the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Pſ.* 39. 1. *I will hold my mouth*; ſo have we all need to hold our hearts as with a bridle to hold the bridle upon our wills, affections, and appetites. Do not you ſee how apt you are to run too faſt this way? with what ſpeed are ſome Profeſſors riding downwards? what haſte do they make to be rich and to be great in this world? The very Mountains of this Earth, the Mountains of Pride and worldly Greatneſs and Glory, the very Hill tops of Worldlings, are but as low Valleys to a Chriſtian; he is ſtill going down at hill, while he is climbing up theſe worldly Mountains; and therefore he needs the bridle to hold him in. Conſider it, do we not ſtill want to be warned and called upon, and to call upon our ſelves to lay hold upon the bridle? Behold, Friends, how many of us do ſuffer our carnal hearts to run their courſe? how ſeldom do we give check to our fleſhly deſires? how ſeldom do we ſpeak ſuch a word to our ſelves? Stay, O my heart, not too faſt, O my ſoul;

Soul: How little pains do we take to reſtrain our intemperate affections? How very few ſelf-bridling Chriſtians, ſelf-checking Chriſtians, are here among us? When we do hear ſuch words, I am afraid I am making too much haſte to be rich, I am afraid I allow my ſelf too much liberty for the pleaſing my ſlew? Or if ſuch a word be now and then let fall, yet how little is it hearkned to? Though we ſometimes fear we run too faſt this way, yet on we let our ſelves run, and do not lay a due reſtraint upon our ſelves: Or if we do a little check our motions earthward, yet do we effectually reſtrain them? 'Tis not enough that you ſay, My heart needs a Bridle; you muſt make uſe of the Bridle: when you have ſtopped your hearts in their carnal courſe, then you have done ſomething

Friends, when you have conſidered and tried the difficulty of preventing your motions downwards, and of ſpeeding your way upwards, then you will ſee farther what need you have to beſtir your ſelves.

Lay altogether: Is it certain that thoſe that fall ſhort of Religion, or fall off from the Religion they have, will be loſt at laſt? Is there ſuch a diſtance betwixt what we are and what we ſhould be? Is it ſo hard to raiſe thoſe that are fallen? Is it ſo hard to diſcern the Soul-conſumption till it be almoſt paſt cure? Is there ſuch an indiſpoſition in conſuming Souls to ſeek, and ſuch an oppoſition made by a ſtirring Devil, and their ſtirring luſts, againſt their obtaining their cure? Is it ſo hard for thoſe that ſtand to get on their way? then certainly every one of us had need to awaken and look to our ſelves. Thus much for the 2d. General.

3. *What it is to take hold of God?* In anſwer to this 3 things.

1. *Our*

1. *Our great Happineſs is in this, that the Lord is in us.*

2. *Our Happineſs is in this, that the Lord is among us.*

3. *Our taking hold of God is our continuing the Preſence of God with us, and our preventing his Departure.*

1. *Our great Happineſs is in this, that the Lord is in us.* God is then in us.

1. *When the Fear of God is within us.*

2. *When the Face of God is upon us.*

1. *When the fear of God is within us.* When the Spirit of the Lord, the Image and Holineſs of the Lord, is within us, which come all to one: That Promiſe, *Jer.* 32. 40. *I will put my fear into their hearts*, is the ſame as thoſe, *Jer.* 31. and *Ezek.* 36. *I will put my ſpirit within you. A new heart will I give you.* Or as *Luke* 17. 21. *The Kingdom of God is within you.* When God takes up his Habitation, ſets up his Throne in the hearts of his People, undertakes the Government of them by his Word and Spirit, ſubdues them to himſelf, reigns in righteouſneſs in their Souls, and makes them his voluntary Subjects and willing People; when the Grace of God prevails and bears rule in their Hearts. 'Tis not Gods being in their Mouths, the Grace of God in their Lips, but his being in their Hearts, his dwelling and living in their Hearts, the real and inward Sanctification of them by his Holy Spirit that dwelleth in them.

This is the being of God in his People, and this is the bleſſedneſs or happineſs of his People. When God is within us the Devil is caſt out, ſin is thrown down, the Kingdom of Satan is deſtroyed where the Kingdom of God is ſet up. It is peoples miſery to have the Devil in them, to have Sin bear rule; and therefore 'tis there bleſſedneſs to have theſe Tyrants cut

down

down and caſt out, and the Kingdom of God ſet up in their ſtead.

2. *When the Face of God is upon us*; when we live in his fear, and live alſo in the light of his Countenance; when he ſhines and ſmiles upon our hearts; when he loves his Saints, and ſhews them his Loves; when he reveals his good will and good liking of them, and lets them know that they are accepted with him; when he is their Friend, and lets them have the countenance of their Friend towards them; when he is their Father, and cauſes them to feel the Bowels of their Father, the Compaſſions and Kindneſſes of their Father, and hereby makes them to joy in his Love, and to rejoyce in hope of the Glory of God: This is Bleſſedneſs indeed, theſe are Bleſſed Ones, whoſe God is thus their Lord. *Bleſſed are the people who are in ſuch a caſe, bleſſed are the people whoſe God is the Lord*, Pſ. 144. 15.

Chriſtians, you need not complain whatever you want, if you have no bread in your houſes, no money in your purſes, no health in your Bodies, no reſt in your bones, yet have you the Lord God in your hearts? it is enough, you are bleſſed Souls. Sinners, ye need not boaſt your ſelves and lift up your heads ſo high, you have money in your purſes, you have friends in your houſes, you have health in your bodies, you have marrow in your bones, you can hardly tell what you lack that would pleaſe you; and yet miſerable ſouls are you all, God is not in you, and that, to him that knows what it is, is miſery enough to blaſt all your comforts and your joys. The Devil is where God is not; Sin bears rule where God doth not; and this is the upſhot of your boaſting, and bleſſing, and comforting of your ſelves; this is all you can ſay; matters of this World go well with me, I can live a plentiful, and pleaſant, and merry life; the Sun

ſhines

ſhines on my Tabernacle, I have the Wind on my ſide, I am on the warm ſide of the Hedge, I proſper, I flouriſh in the Earth, all things go well with me, I have but this one thing to trouble me, my Soul is in the hands of the Devil, there's nothing of God in me, and where God is not, there the Devil bears rule. This, if ye knew it, is miſery enough for you, that whatever you have, God is none of yours; and this is happineſs enough for the Saints, that God is in them of a truth.

2. *Our happineſs is, that the Lord is among us*, that we have the viſible tokens of his preſence, that the Ark of his preſence is among us, that we have his Statutes, and his Ordinances, and his Worſhip among us; that the Doors of his Houſe are open, and the Glory of the Lord filleth his Houſe; that the Ordinances are among us, and are not as a miſcarrying Womb or dry Breaſts, but are fruitful to the propagating an Holy Seed, bringing forth abundance of Children to the Lord, and nurſing up thoſe that are to be fat and flouriſhing. This was that Glory of the Lord which the Pſalmiſt ſo thirſts and longs to ſee, *Pſ.* 63. 2. *That I might ſee thy Power and thy Glory, ſo as I have ſeen thee in the Sanctuary.* This was that happineſs of the Church which was propheſied, *Iſ.* 60. 2, &c. *The Lord ſhall ariſe upon thee, and his Glory ſhall be ſeen in thee.* v. 4. *Thy Sons ſhall come from far, and thy Daughters ſhall be nurſed up at thy ſide; then ſhalt thou ſee and flow together, and thine heart ſhall fear and be enlarged.* v. 8. *Who are thoſe that flee as a Cloud, and as the Doves of the Windows?* v. 14, 15. *They ſhall call thee the City of the Lord, the* Zion *of the Holy One of* Iſrael; *and I will make thee an everlaſting Excellency, a Joy of many Generations.* v. 21. *Thy People ſhall be all righteous, the Branch of my Planting, the Work of my Hands, that I may be glori-*

fied.

fied. This you will acknowledge muſt needs be an happy time, and all this is the fruit of the preſence of the Lord among his People. When the Glory of the Lord fills his Houſe, and the off-ſprings of the Lord are numerous and proſperous; when the Golden Candleſticks are ſet up, and the Son of man walks in the midſt of his Candleſticks; when there are not only here and there a flouriſhing Believer, but when there are flouriſhing Churches, flouriſhing companies of Believers; when there are not only a throng of *People* crowding the Doors of the Lords Houſe, but a throng of *Saints* worſhipping at his Feet, and walking in the Name of the Lord: Happy would ſuch days be, bleſſed are the People that are in ſuch a caſe, by the preſence of the Lord among them.

Yea, and every degree towards ſuch a State is ſo far forth a degree of peoples happineſs; when the Lord gives his Prophets, and Teachers, and Ordinances, and (any) freedom to attend upon them, and any little ſucceſs to the propagating of holineſs, and the ſincere Profeſſors of it: This is a Token and a Fruit of the preſence of God with them. 'Tis a mercy for people to enjoy their civil advantages, fruitful times and ſeaſons for the good things of the Earth; plenty of Bread, free and flouriſhing Trades, freedom from Oppreſſion, *&c.* Theſe are Mercies, but theſe may be where the Lord is not as to his gracious Preſence; 'tis freedom and encouragement for Religion, the plentiful raining down of Manna, the bread that comes from Heaven, and our thriving by our Bread; 'tis this that evidences that the Lord is among us.

3. *Our taking hold of God is our continuing this Preſence of the Lord with us, and preventing his departure*; where I ſhall ſhew 3 things.

1. *God may depart from a people with whom he hath been preſent.*

2. 'Tis

2. *'Tis wo with that people from whom God departeth.*

3. *This is to take hold of God to prevent his departure.*

1. *God may depart from his People with whom he hath been preſent*: And that,

1. *From particular perſons*, from whom he may then be ſaid to depart:

1. *When he hides his Face from them.*

2. *When he ſuſpends the influences of his Grace.*

3. *When he looſens the reins of Government.*

4. *When he denies them the benefit of his protection.*

5. *When he turns away his Heart from them and rejects them.*

1. *When he hides his Face from them*, and withdraws the light of his Countenance. Thus he withdrew from that precious Servant of his, *David*, Pſ. 30. 7. *Thou didſt hide thy Face, and I was troubled*; whom we find praying, *Pſ.* 4. 6. *Lord, lift up the light of thy Countenance upon me*; and *Pſ.* 51. 12. *Reſtore unto me the Joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.* Gods Holy Ones may forget God, may grow ſecure, and careleſs, and wanton Children; and the Lord will not countenance the beſt of them in their ſins: If they forget God, he finds a way to remember them of him, by conveying himſelf out of their ſight; the clouds upon his Face, the darkneſs upon their own Spirits, make them remember the light which once they had, and to look the better to it when the light returns.

2. *When he ſuſpends the Influences of his Grace*, withholds his Spirit from them: This was the caſe of *David*, when he prayed, *Pſ.* 51. 20. *Renew a right Spirit within me.* When thoſe dews and ſhowers of his Grace, which are neceſſary to the holding our Souls in a flouriſhing ſtate, are reſtrained; and here-

upon

upon the Grace we have received withers and grows to decay. The former withdrawing of God may consist with the vigour of Grace; God may hide his Face sometimes from the deareſt of his Saints, to prevent their decay; but the ſuſpending of his gracious influences will be followed with a decay. The Somer Sun-beams ripen the Fruit, but the Winter Sun, when by its diſtance its influences are the weaker, leaves all to fade and wither. It's winter with thoſe Souls, who by their diſtance from Chriſt do loſe the influences of the Sun of Righteouſneſs. When the Sun comes about again, and renews its influences, then it's Spring, and freſh Buds, and Flowers break forth.

O Friends, is it not winter with many of our Souls? Have not the influences from above evidently failed us? We have waſted out our Somer, and driven the Lord to a diſtance; and now behold how our good things die away within us: 'Tis become cold and froſty weather in our Souls, the cold hath withered our Fruit, and the Sun doth not revive it: The Lord God is ſadly withdrawn and gone far off from many of our Souls. If Chriſtians would be ſo wiſe as to keep them near to the Lord, and ſo to keep the Lord near to them, it would be ever Spring and Somer with them, and they ſhould know Winter no more. O let us hold us under the Divine influences; take heed how you put the Lord far off from you; take heed of wandring from the Lord, leſt he puniſh your wandrings from him by removing himſelf from you.

3. *When he looſens the Reins of Government*, and leaves them to themſelves and their own fooliſh hearts, takes off his bridle from them, and lets them run their own courſe, ſuffers their luſts to rule them, and lets them alone to walk in their own counſels.

Thus

Thus he withdrew from *Iſrael*, Pſ. 81. 12. *I gave them up to their own hearts luſts*, or to the hardneſs or imagination of their own hearts,------*And they walked in their own counſels*: This is a worſe caſe than the former. It goes ill with thoſe Souls, where the gracious influences of God are ſuſpended: That Field or that Garden is in but poor caſe that wants the Sun and the Showers; but when it wants the care or the eye of the Husbandman too, what good can be expected from it or to it? When grace is reſtrained, and ſin is reſtrained, to what a paſs will ſuch Souls quickly grow?

Gods Government is upheld in Souls, by the upholding of *Conſcience* in its vigilancy, in its tenderneſs, in its authority. When Conſcience is tender and watchful, and we hold our ſelves under its inſpection and government; whilſt Chriſtians keep them to be conſciencious, whilſt Conſcience tells them of their duty, and warns them of their ſin, and they will hearken to Conſcience, their caſe ſo long is hopeful; though God hides his Face, and leave their Souls in the dark, and ſpeaks not a comfortable word to them, yea and leaves them flat and dead as to the wonted lively operations of his Grace, ſuſpending (as to their ſenſe) both his quickning influences, and his comforting influences; yet as long as Gods Government is kept up in them, as long as conſcience is kept tender, and wakeful, though they want the light of the Lord, yet they keep cloſe to the Law of their God; though his countenance be not towards them, yet they have a good conſcience towards him; though they cannot rejoyce in God, yet they will walk with God; though they cannot now ſee his Face, yet they are ſtill diligent in ſeeking his Face; though the Lord ſeems to have caſt them off, yet they will not caſt him off; ſo long, though their caſe be ſad at preſent, yet it will

be ſafe at laſt, *Iſ.* 50. 10. *Who is among you that feareth the Lord and obeyeth the voice of his Servant? though he walk in darkneſs and have no light, let him truſt in the Name of the Lord*, &c. Chriſtians, are there any of you in darkneſs and without the light of comfort and of joy in your hearts? hath the Lord hid his Face from you? this you will mourn under; yet do you fear and obey the Lord? do you live under his Government? though you cannot ſee him and rejoyce in him, yet do you ſerve him and follow him? So long 'tis well enough, truſt in the Lord, and ſtay your ſelves upon God, he will be a Sanctuary and ſupport to you, though his Sun ſhine not upon you. But when God hides his Face, with-holds the ſenſible Influences of his Grace, and looſens the Reins of Government too, leaves men to themſelves, and they thereupon follow their own hearts, and walk in their own counſels, then whither will they run?

Friends, whatever befall you, pray that God will ſtill keep you under government; and look to your ſelves that you do not throw off his government. Keep your conſciences tender, and hold you under the government of them; ſuch Backſliders there are who have loſt the ſight of God, & have grown to decay through the failing of divine influences, and alſo have loſt conſcience too; their luſt hath gotten the government of them, the world, the love of the world, and their cares for the world bear the great ſway in their Souls; all the bonds of Religion are looſened, and can take no hold of them farther than their carnal eaſe and intereſt will give leave; if they continue in the number of Profeſſors ſtill, yet they are a ſort of looſe Profeſſors, unruly ones, all the Religion they have will not rule their Tongues, nor rule their paſſions, nor their appetites: When their paſſion is up, religion muſt ſtand by, conſcience muſt hold its peace, or if it ſpeak they will

will not hear: Luſt muſt be let alone to controul conſcience, but conſcience may not be ſuffered to controul luſt; the ſins which are for their gain or their pleaſure, they can ſwallow them and not keck at it: The duties that are a wearineſs to the fleſh, they can omit them, or ſhuffle them over; when the world, or their ſloth won't give them leave, they can let praying alone, or reading, or ſo much as ſerious thinking of God, and the things of God; they can let it all alone. So much of religion as will ſerve their turns they will take up, and what's more than that, they can diſpenſe with themſelves in it. If they be told of their faults, and their haltings, and be never ſo ſolemnly charged in the name of the Lord to remember themſelves, and recover out of this wretched ſtate, 'tis all one as if nothing had been ſaid; on they go in their old carnal rode, and will lay nothing to heart: And as they let themſelves alone, ſo God lets them alone too, and will not rebuke them for their ſins; or if there be a rebuke that he ſends ſometimes in their ears, as they ſtand in the crowd amongſt other Sinners; yet he will not ſet it upon their hearts, but lets them alone to ſhift it off as they will, and to harden their hearts againſt it; this is a ſign that the Lord is departed from ſuch Souls.

O Friends, how many rebukes hath the Lord given to Backſliders? how many charges hath he given you to remember and repent, and to ſhake up your ſelves out of your liſtleſs careleſs ſtate? do theſe rebukes ſtick? do theſe charges ſtick? do they work upon you? have they ſet you upon your repenting or recovering work? how hath it been with you? what have you done, ſince the Lord hath been particularly dealing with you in this matter? Are there any of you that have done nothing but ſleep on and continue as you were? O Sirs, let me tell ſuch of you,

that 'tis to be feared the Lord is departed from you, that he hath looſened the reins of his Government, and hath left you to your ſelves to grow worſe and worſe, harder and harder, till you be utterly conſumed and brought to nothing.

4. *When he denies the benefit of his protection.* Here 2 things.

1. *The Lord is the Protector of his people.*

2. *God then departs from them, when he caſts them out of his protection.*

1. *The Lord is the Protector of his People*, the Keeper of *Iſrael*, Pſ. 121. 5, 7. *The Lord is thy Keeper, the Lord is thy ſhade upon thy right hand, the Lord ſhall preſerve thee from all evil; the Lord ſhall preſerve thy Soul.* He is not only the Keeper of their Subſtance, of their Flocks, and of their Herds, and of their Houſes; but he preſerves the Souls of his Saints, *Pſ.* 97. 10. 'Tis true, every man is to be his own Keeper, the Keeper of his own Soul; we abuſe and forfeit the protection of God, that thence grow careleſs and neglect the keeping of our ſelves. Commit the keeping of your Souls to him in (well doing,) 1 *Pet.* 4. 19. Doſt thou ſay, the Lord is thee Keeper of my Soul, and I will leave it to him, and will not truſt in my ſelf, in mine own keeping? Thou ſayſt well that thou wilt not truſt thy Soul in thy own keeping; but doſt thou hereupon neglect the keeping of thy Soul? wilt thou not do what thou canſt to keep thy ſelf, but wilt grow careleſs of thine own heart, and leave the whole care upon him? thou herein forfeiteſt Gods protection: The ſame word that promiſes the Lord ſhall preſerve thy Soul, requires, *Prov.* 4. 23. keep thine own Soul, *Keep thine heart with all diligence.* We muſt be every one of us our own keepers, or God will not; but here is our great ſecurity, when we have done all, that it is the Lord that is our Keeper. The De-

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vil could tell that well enough, *Job* 1. 10. Haſt thou not made an hedge about *Job?* He would fain have been doing with him, but God had hedg'd the Devil ſo out, that he could not touch him without his leave: And he that hedg'd the Devil out from *Job*, hedges him out from all his Saints; and he that hedges the Devil out, hedges the World out with all its temptations and ſnares.

Chriſtians, you whoſe hearts are upright with God, how is it that the world and its temptations are not broken in upon you, and have not totally carried you away from God and his Holy ways, and carried you after your covetouſneſs or your pleaſures, or the honours and preferments of this Earth, as it hath done many others? O you may thank God for this, he hath hedgd the World out: 'Twere well with many, even Profeſſors, if they could find in their experiences as you do find in yours, that God had hedg'd the World out of them. But O how many of theſe, even Profeſſors, are there, that the World hath broken in upon them, broken in upon their hearts, and carried them away after it. Do not ſome of you feel that your hearts are gone, gone after your covetouſneſs, gone after your eaſe, and your pleaſures, gone from God, gone from your Religion as to the ſtrictneſs and power of it; gone from a good conſcience and your tenderneſs of it, gone from your heavenly minds, and ſo you are become of thoſe that mind earthly things? Sure ſome of you do not know your ſelves, do not obſerve your ſelves, nor are acquainted with your own Spirits, if you do not acknowledge, *Lord be merciful to me, mine heart is far gone*; my conſcience, my tenderneſs, my religion, my love to Chriſt is much loſt by the incroachment of this preſent World. Is it ſo? and how does it ſit upon yonr hearts? does it not trouble you? does it not make

you afraid? ſure you have reaſon to be afraid, and to ſay within your hearts, I doubt I am none of thoſe Saints of whom God hath undertaken to be the Keeper; or at leaſt, if God had ever an hedge about me, the hedge is broken down, the tempter is broken in, and is carrying away all that little good I had, and will never leave carrying and carrying, till he hath carried away my Soul.

God hath made an hedge about his Saints, not to hedge (all) temptations out; he ſometimes ſuffers the devil & the world, as he did in the caſe af *Job*, to break over the Hedge: He lets his Precious Ones to fall into divers temptations, but ſtill they are under the protection of his Promiſe, 1 *Cor.* 10.13. *God is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation make a way to eſcape?* Chriſtians may be hard put to it, & may ſuffer many a foyl; we too often feel the Devil is too hard for us, the World too hard for us, and we ſuffer great loſſes and impairings in our grace and comfort: But the promiſe will bring us about again, & fetch us in again, & knock off our fingers from being ſo bold with theſe earthly things. Indeed we can never have aſſurance that we are under the protection of that Promiſe, but are left without the hedge and are none of the Lords; whilſt the world and its temptations do continue to make ſuch a prey of our Souls, and hold us ſuch Slaves and Captives to it, but if we be the Lords, the Promiſe will bring it about again. This is the firſt, God is the Protector of his People.

2. *Then God departs from them when he caſts them out of his protection*; when he ſays concerning any perſon, as he ſaid concerning his Vineyard, *Iſ.* 5. 5, 6. *I will take away the hedge thereof and it ſhall be eaten up, and break down the wall thereof and it ſhall be trodden down*; *and I will lay it waſte, it ſhall not be pruned nor digged, but bryars and thorns ſhall come up*; *I will*

alſo command the Clouds that they rain no rain upon it. 'Tis one thing for the tempter to be ſuffered to break in over the Hedge, another to have the hedge removed. God had his Hedge ſtill about *Job*, though he ſuffered the Devil to leap over it; and this Hedge limited him how far he ſhould go, and no further: But when the Wall is removed, and the Hedge broken down, and the Enemy is let alone to make what waſte he will, to eat up, and to trample into dirt the Fruit of the Vineyard, and make it a place for Briars and Thorns to grow up inſtead of the Vine; then the Lord hath caſt off, and is gone from the Vineyard. Sure, Friends, there are ſuch Profeſſors in the world, and look diligently if there be any ſuch among you, about whom the Lord hath broken down his Hedge, whom he hath even given up to the world and given up to the devil, and in whom theſe Enemies have eaten up even all their good, and made their Souls a meer waſte, where grows nothing but Bryars and thorns; in whom religion and righteouſneſs, truth and honeſty, faith and love, and hope and prayer, and all ſenſe of God, and things to come, are devoured and eaten up of the world, and thoſe bryars and thorns of pride and luſt, of envy and intemperance, and all unrighteouſneſs, are ſprung up in their ſtead. My hope is, that there are none of the Profeſſors of this place that are ſo far gone as this; but whether there are none of you that are going, and in a fair way to it, I leave to your conſciences to judge. If the wall be not utterly thrown down, yet are there not ſome ſad breaches made in it at which the Devil and the World have entred? If all be not eaten up, if all be not trodden down, if there be ſomething of Religion left alive, if ſome little minding of God, ſome little care of your Souls, ſome little ſavour of Chriſtianity be left, (and how very little is there in ſome?)

though all be not eaten up, yet is not this world an eating daily, and a consuming more and more that little of God that remains? Does not the World grow upon you, and does not Religion waste, and your Souls go back farther & farther? Is it thus with any of you? look you diligently whether it be or no; if it be thus, though I will not say, the Lord is utterly departed from you, the Lord hath rejected you; yet thus much I must say, God is going away from your Souls; look to it, and lay hold upon him by repenting and speedy turning towards him, or expect no other but that he will throw you off, and cast you out of his sight.

5. *When he turns away his heart from them and rejects them. The Lord hath rejected thee*, said *Samuel* to *Saul*; and afterwards, *The Lord is departed from me*, said *Saul* to *Samuel*. God deals with particular persons that will not be reclaimed as with backsliding *Israel*, concerning whom he said, *Jer.* 15. 1. *Though* Moses *and* Samuel *stood before me, yet my mind*, or my heart, *could not be towards this People; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.* God had sent Prophet upon Prophet to them, to reclaim and recover them from their Apostasies to their Idols, but when they would not be reclaimed, then this fatal word comes at length, Cast them out of my sight, my mind is no longer towards them.

Friends, you that have been Backsliders, that have fallen in your Religion, that have declined from God to the World, God hath sent many a word to you to recover you, and now he is giving you solemn warning again: What will you now do? shall this word be lost and take no effect upon you? will you yet continue to sleep on and refuse to be awakened? O take heed, O awaken, who knows, if ye yet refuse, but God may forthwith speak such a dreadful word concerning you, I have no mind to this backsliding

Soul;

Soul, I'll be troubled with him no longer, I'll give him a Bill of Divorce, and ſend him away. If you ſhould ask as they did there, Whither will he ſend us? Why, any whither; let them go whither they will for me, I'll own them no longer: Send this man to the World which he hath loved, ſend him to the Devil whom he hath followed; let him be gone from me, I have no mind to him; this backſliding wretch, he hath no mind to me, he hath more mind to the World, to his Money, to his Trade, to his Oxen, then he hath to his God; and I have no more mind to him, than he hath to me. Since he hath ſo much mind to the World, and to the Service of the Devil, let the World take him, let the Devil take him, give him a Bill of divorce and ſend him away. What, falſe to his God, to his Conſcience, to his Religion, to his Covenant? What, an Hypocrite, an Apoſtate, an Idolater? One that has been ſo, and will be ſo? though I have call'd him back, and threatned him back, and cryed unto him, though thou haſt played the Harlot and the Hypocrite theſe many years, yet return to me; and yet none of my Words will ſtir him, nor move him, but on he goes his old way: Away with ſuch a wretch, I have no mind any longer to him, caſt him out of my ſight.

Friends, you that are gone back, do not comfort your hearts with ſuch a thought, However I am no total Apoſtate, I have ſomething of Religion, ſomething of Conſcience left me; but know, that if you be not total Apoſtates, yet your gradual backſlidings are the way to it; and if you look not the better to it, you will never ſtop (as I have often warned you) till you have loſt all. Are you not total Apoſtates? no more were *Iſrael*; they ſtill acknowledged God, and worſhipped the true God; but though they did but hang betwixt God and their Idols, yet upon their re-

refuſal to return, God ſent forth this word concerning their utter rejection, Away with them, caſt them out of my ſight. Thou haſt, thou ſayeſt, ſomething of God in thee, ſomething of Religion in thee, but art thou fallen ſo far from God, as to hang betwixt God and the World, and ſhall not this ſolemn warning, which comes to thee in the name of the God of Heaven, ſhall not this ſhake thee up from ſleeping in ſuch a ſtate, and raiſe and recover thee out of that carnality and earthlineſs to ſincerity in Religion and Godlineſs? Shall all theſe warnings be ſpoken to thee in vain, and leave thee ſuch an earthly minded, ſuch a dead-hearted careleſs Soul as they find thee? God forbid, Friends, it ſhould have no more ſucceſs than ſo; and look you to it every one of you that are particularly concern'd in it; look to it, leſt if you continue without an effectual change and recovery, God ſhould ſpeak ſuch a dreadful word to any of you, I have no longer any mind to this man, I have no longer any mind to this woman, give them a Bill of Divorce and ſend them away, caſt them out of my ſight, let them be gone from me.

Friends, you muſt give me leave to ſpeak as plainly to you and as cloſely in this matter as I am able. I know how ſad 'twill be with you if the word doth not prevail; and I know this conſuming Diſeaſe is hard to be cured: Backſliders are ordinarily of hard hearts, and deaf ears, and ſo hard to be recovered. God knows how it may be with you, whether God may gain any thing, Religion may gain any thing, upon you by this warning; I know it will be hard work to bring you up out of this caſe, and yet I am loth to loſe my labour: I would fain do ſomething for Chriſt, and ſomething for the help of your poor Souls; and therefore you muſt bear with me, that I thus ſet my ſelf to ſpeak over and over thus cloſely to you;

you; that if it be poſſible, my words may ſtick with you. Do not ſay that I think too hardly of you, and make you worſe than you are; I thank God that there are among you thoſe who are faithful, and ſtand their ground; I thank God that there is ſo much Religion as there is, even in ſome of you; I thank God I have hope there is as much of ſerious Religion continuing in this Congregation, as in the moſt Congregations about us: But I muſt tell you, that he is a ſtranger to us, that doth not perceive at what a low ebb ſerious Religion is amongſt many of us; and he whoſe heart bleeds not and breaks not at what his eyes may ſee and his ears may hear, hath but little of the Spirit of Chriſtianity in him. Sure there are too many among us that have declined in great degree, O that this word might find them out, and bring them to their knees firſt, and then ſet them upon their Legs, that ſo there may be a prevention of their utter Rejection.

2. *God may depart from his Churches and the Congregations of his People*; and then he departs from theſe:

1. *When he ſhuts up his Houſe*, and writes upon the Doors thereof; *The Glory is departed*. When he cauſes their viſions to fail, his Ordinances to ceaſe from among them; when preaching, and praying, and all his ſpiritual worſhip fails; when, though the Candleſticks continue, yet there are few Candles left; and thoſe that are not quite put out, are put under a Buſhel; when Paſtors and Teachers, which were burning and ſhining Lights, are removed into a Corner.

2. *When he pulls down his Houſe*: When not only the Candles are carried away, but the Candleſticks are broken in pieces: When he unchurches his People, and ſcatters his Congregations: When the Societies

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of the Saints are broken in pieces, and those that went to the House of God in companies, have neither house to go into, nor company to go together. It's promised, *Is.* 33. 20. *Ye shall look upon* Zion *the City of our solemnities; thine eyes shall see* Jerusalem *a quiet Habitation, a Tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the Stakes thereof shall be removed, neither shall any of the Cords thereof be broken; but there the Glorious Lord will be to us a place of broad Rivers and Streams.* Now when this word is changed, and our eyes see *Jerusalem* a troubled habitation, our Tabernacle taken down, its Stakes that pitched it, and its Cords that held it, all removed and broken in pieces; when the Habitation of the Lord is become a desolation, and his Vineyard become a meer Wilderness; when the Cormorant and the Bittern, when Owls and Satyrs, when the Beasts and the false Prophets are where once were the Prophets and People of the Lord, then is the Lord departed.

3. *When, though his House and his Tabernacle stands, and his Ordinances are continued, though there be Preaching and Praying still, yet the Spirit of the Lord is departed.* When he doth not continue to bless his House, and bless his Ordinances to his People; when that word is fulfilled upon them, *Is.* 28. 13. *The Word of the Lord is to them, precept upon precept, line upon line, that they might go and fall backward:* When the Children of *Zion* are as it was said those that hate *Zion* should be, *Ps.* 129. 6. *as the Grass upon the House top that withereth before it be grown up, whereof the Mower filleth not his hand, nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom:* Even this is a departure, and a grievous departure of the Lord from his People; when he continues not among them to bless them, continues his Word among them, precept upon precept, line upon line, lets them have Sabbath after Sabbath, Meeting

upon

upon Meeting, Sermon upon Sermon, but nothing proſpers, but they fall and go backward, and wither as the graſs upon the Houſe top.

O how many Congregations amongſt us are there from whom the Lord is already thus far departed! though he gives us his Word, yet he doth not bleſs his Word; though the Sowers come forth to ſow, yet how is the Seed rotten under the Clods, how little is there that comes up! Though the Planters plant, and the Builders build, how few young Plants do we ſee coming up? how ſlowly does the Building riſe? does not the Building rather go backward! do not the Plants that are hang their heads and wither, and no more riſe in their room? When do we hear of a new convert brought in, and how few do we ſee of the former planting to flouriſh? O we fade, we fade, we wither as the Graſs upon the Houſe top; our life, and our ſtrength, and our beauty, how is it fallen and withered? the beauty of love, the beauty of humility, the beauty of holineſs, how is it even all marred? Sure this is a token of the Lords departure from us. Thus you have ſeen how the Lord departs from his People.

2. *It's wo with a people when the Lord departs from them: Wo unto them*, ſaith the Lord, *when I depart from them*, Hoſ. 9. 12.

1. *'Tis woful to them that have ſomething of Religion in them*; when their Paſtors, and Paſtures, and Waters fail, what's like to become of them? even they alſo are like to pine for want. There are none to whom Famine is ſo tedeous as to hungry Souls; the living Child will cry for Bread, when thoſe that are dead can want it well enough, and never feel their want: And it will not be woful only to their ſenſe, they will mourn, and lament, and be pierced to the very heart to ſee ſuch a day; but to ſome amongſt them

them it will be a worſe wo than that. Whilſt ſome *mourn* for want of the Word, others will *pine away* for want. *Ezek.* 24. 21, 23. *I will profane my Sanctuary, the excellency of your ſtrength, the deſire of your eyes, and ye ſhall pine away for your iniquities.* Profeſſors, there be ſome among you that have languiſhed and grown to decay in the fulneſs of all things, by all the Ordinances of the Goſpel you have had, by all the Manna that hath fallen among you, by all our Preaching to you, and Praying over you, we can hardly keep life in you; the little good that remains is weak and even ready to vaniſh away: But what then will become of you in the Day of Famine? when your Manna ſhall ceaſe, and your Waters fail? O tremble to hear this word ſpoken concerning you, *you ſhall not mourn nor weep*; you won't be much troubled, nor lay it to heart, but *ye ſhall pine away* for your iniquities. If in ſuch a day of plenty as you have had you are ſuch pining Souls, what can you expect but you may pine to death in days of want?

2. *Eſpecially 'tis woful to thoſe that have no Religion in them*, that are blind, and hard, and dead Souls, that remain ſtill without Chriſt and without God in the World. Sinners, if ye be not brought in to be Believers whilſt the Word of Faith is preached to you, if ye be not converted whilſt the Word of Repentance is preached among you, if you continue ſuch blind and ignorant Souls whilſt you have the light with you, what will ye be in the days of darkneſs? Sinners concern not themſelves about any ſuch thing; let the Goſpel ſhine or be under a cloud, let Religion flouriſh or vaniſh, let God be amongſt them or be gone, let there be preaching or no preaching, 'tis all one to them, they are like *Gallio*, Acts 18. 17. they *are for none of theſe things*. But, Sinners, let me tell you, as little as you regard it how it goes with the Church of God

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and the Ordinances of God, whether there be liberty or reſtraint, a plenty or a famine of the word; when ever the Goſpel departs, when ever a famine of the word comes, 'tis you are the men that are like chiefly to have the miſery of it: 'Tis an affliction to the Saints, and they may be great loſers, they may languiſh and grow to a decay; but you are like *to loſe your Souls*, you are like to dye in your Sins, and to periſh for ever; if you are thus hardned under the word, how are you like to be won to Chriſt without the Word? If the Devil hath ſuch power with you to lead you on in your ſins, in your drunkenneſs, and ſwearing, and lying, and covetouſneſs, and to hold you under your impenitence, notwithſtanding all the inſtructions, and warnings, and reproofs you have from the word, how faſt will he hold you when there's none to reſiſt him? If you never be converted and brought to repentance, you know you muſt to Hell; and what hope will there be of your converſion when the converting word is no more preached to you? Sinners, you had need make better uſe of the Word while you have it among you, you had need look for another manner of work of God than hitherto hath been upon you: Of all men in the World you eſpecially had need pray, Lord take not the Word of thy Truth from among us; or at leaſt, Lord, delay that dark day, O let my Soul be firſt wrought upon, O let it firſt lay hold on me, and recover me from my ſins, and from the power of the Devil; let me become a Convert to Chriſt, a Diſciple of Chriſt before that day come: you had need pray thus, and you had need hearken more to the Word while you have it, and haſten in to Chriſt. That day will ſtay for none of you when 'tis coming; and O! what if it ſhould come upon you? if the Goſpel ſhould be carried away, and leave you in that ſinful guilty ſtate

that

that now you are in? Look to it Sinners, in the name of God look to it, ſtrike in with Chriſt preſently, make thorow work for your Souls inſtantly, while it is called to day harden not your hearts; don't any longer ſtand, ſhall I, ſhall I? one day or other I hope I ſhall: For ought you know, God may be even about to pack up his Treaſure, to take down his ſtanding and ready to be gone, and then where are you? O carry this thought upon your heart; if God ſhould go, and his Goſpel ſhould go, and leave my Soul at this paſs, wo, wo to me poor wretched Soul, what ſhall become of me for ever? O, if the preaching of the Word leave me under the power of the Devil, ſure the Famine of the Word is like to ſeal me up under the hardneſs of my heart to everlaſting condemnation. Look to it, Sinners, pray that ſuch a Day may not overtake you thus; and O haſten, and take the preſent ſeaſon, and this day break off your ſins by repentance, and yield your ſelves to the Lord; be converted that ye may be ſaved. Fear not but Chriſt will accept you if you will now come in; he is yet willing, he ſtands ſtretching his hands to you, he lifts up his Voice to you, and calls, *Come ye poor ſinful ſouls, come unto me, make an adventnre for Heaven, come and be my hearty Diſciples; let the wicked among you forſake his wickedneſs, let him return to the Lord and he (ſhall) have mercy.* Fear not but if you will now come in you ſhall be accepted; but dare not for your lives delay any longer, leſt the days of darkneſs overtake you, leſt the Goſpel be removed from us, and leave you bound in your ſins, and then you be carried down, bound hand and foot into the everlaſting Priſon. The Lord grant that this be not the diſmal lot of any of your Souls, and look you to it in time that it be not; loſe not the preſent ſeaſon, the Sun ſeems to grow low, it's almoſt night; O ſee to it

that

that it be not Sunſet among us, before it be Sunriſing in any of your Souls. I hope the day is even now dawning upon ſome poor Sinners among you, that ſome of your Souls are looking towards Chriſt, and making towards Chriſt, and making your eſcape from your Sins: Is it ſo with thee? art thou awakened from thy Sins? art thou wiſhing and waiting for Chriſt? Even this is the dawning of the day upon thee: O for the Sun riſing, for the forming of Chriſt upon thine heart, look that the work that is, go not back again, but come on, and hold on, that thy little morning light may increaſe and grow up to perfect day, and that the Evening and the Morning meet not.

3. *Our taking hold of God is our continuing the Lord among us, and our preventing his departure.* This was their Sin in the Text, they did not take hold of God, that is, they took no courſe to continue the Lord amongſt them: God was going from them, and they let him go and look'd not after him, they were too willing to part with God. And this is the caſe of Backſliders in heart, they are too well contented that God and they do part; their heart is withdrawn from God, and they matter it not though God withdraws from them.

Our laying hold on God imports theſe 3 things which are neceſſary to our continuing him with us.

1. *Our letting go our Idols or falſe Gods.* God never departs, till there be another God taken in with him and ſet up by him; and God will never continue unleſs theſe Idols be caſt away, *Ezek.* 14. 5. *They are eſtranged from me by their Idols*; they are grown ſtrangers to me, and I muſt be a ſtranger to them; they have taken in other Gods beſides me: And *v.* 5. *Repent*, ſays God, *and turn your ſelves from your I-*

dols: If you would have me ſtay, let them go their way. There is a ſetting up of Idols in *the Congregation*, a ſetting up of Stocks and Stones to worſhip; and there is a ſetting up of Idols *in the Heart*, Ezek. 14. 3. *Theſe men have ſet up their Idols in their Hearts*: Thoſe that have no ſuch Idols as *Iſrael* had, thoſe that abhor Image Worſhip, or worſhipping of the *Sun* and the Hoſt of Heaven, thoſe that would be trembled to ſee an Idol ſet up in the Houſe of God, may yet have an heart full of Idols. One of the chief of our Idols is *the World*, and our great Heart-Idolatry is *Covetouſneſs*, or the Love of the World, *Col.* 3. 5. *And Covetouſneſs which is Idolatry*. If God be provoked to depart from us, 'tis to be ſuſpected that this is the Idol that drives him away: Our hearts are gone after the World, and thereupon 'tis that the Lord God is ſo far from our Hearts. Would you lay hold on God? put away your Idols, caſt this world out of your Hearts. 'Tis vain to confeſs we have ſinned againſt God, 'tis vain to pray, Lord, leave us not: God will never regard your confeſſions nor your prayers, till your Idols be caſt out.

Friends, whatever we ſuffer, or are like to ſuffer, 'tis this World, 'tis our Worldlineſs that hath undone the moſt of us; the gains of this World, the pleaſures of this World have been taken into our Hearts, and thereupon 'tis that God leaves us to ſink and go to ruin as we do. Ceaſe from your Idolatry, away with your Earthly-mindedneſs and Fleſhlineſs, your hands are full of dirt and aſhes, empty them of theſe, or you can never lay hold on God.

We cry out againſt *the Wickedneſs of our Age*, the Atheiſm, the Adulteries, the Oaths, and prodigious Profaneneſs that is among us; and theſe and ſuch like Evils we look on as the reaſon why God is ſuch a ſtranger and ſo angry with us. But beſides theſe

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Wickedneſſes of the openly Profane, there are other iniquities to be found even amongſt thoſe that profeſs againſt this Profaneſs; and this for one, the Iniquity of our Covetouſneſs that hath thus provoked the Lord againſt us, *Iſ.* 57. 17. *For the Iniquity of his Covetouſneſs I was wrath and ſmote him, I hid me and was wrath, and yet he went on frowardly in the way of his Heart.* Here 3 things:

1. *That Covetouſneſs is Iniquity*, or Wickedneſs: Covetous Ones are Wicked Ones, however they may look like Holy Ones; whatever of God or Religion appears, yet their Covetouſneſs, where it is predominant, marks them out for Wicked ones. Art thou a Profeſſor of Religion? doſt thou Hear? doſt thou Pray? doſt thou joyn thy ſelf to thoſe that fear God? and yet art thou a Worldling? thou art but a Wicked Man whatever thy Profeſſion be.

2. *The Iniquity of our Covetouſneſs will make God to withdraw* and hide his Face from us. I hid me and was wrath.

3. *Covetous men, how dear ſoever their Covetouſneſs coſts them, yet they will go on their way*: He went on frowardly, that is, perverſly or obſtinately in his way. He would not be turned back, he would not give off from following his worldly heart, how angry ſoever God was with him for it. O this Diſeaſe of a worldly Heart, when it is rooted once, it hardly admits of a Cure. Beloved, God hath preſcribed you many Remedies, and God hath given you many Warnings, and your Souls have ſuffered great loſs by it: O the impoveriſhment that hath fallen upon your inward man by your ſo over eager purſuit of the advantages of our outward man; and yet for all this, who will take warning? How little abatement is there to be ſeen of the Zeal of our Hearts after Earthly things? O 'tis an evil Diſeaſe, and a tough Diſ-

eaſe, that will hardly be purged away. There are ſome Humours of the Body that are ſo tough, that where they abound they can hardly be purged away without the deſtroying of Nature; and there is no Humour in the Body ſo tough and hard to be removed as this diſeaſe of the Soul.

Well, but yet unleſs you mean to part with God, yea, and to part with him for ever, you muſt let this Idol go. And the like may be ſaid of any other of our Idols, any other Sins you have ſet up in your Hearts. There can be no taking hold of God, but you muſt let all your Idols go; you are at this point, either theſe muſt be parted with, or God and your Souls muſt part. You that are proud Profeſſors, that Pride muſt be laid in the Duſt; you that are for your pleaſure or your eaſe, you that are for your credit and reputation, you that are given to appetite, whoſe God is your Belly or your Throats, you muſt come off from all that your hearts are thus ſet upon, or elſe count upon it, that as you have begun to fall as there is a breach between God and your Souls begun, ſo it will grow worſe and worſe with you, and the breach grow wider and wider, till it become too great to be ever made up.

What, Friends, will ye love this World to the Death? will you love your Pleaſures, and your Eaſe, and your Luſts to the Death? will you ſell all that you have, all your Religion, all your Hopes, and your Comforts that you have had in it? will you ſell your God, and your Souls, for theſe vile things? The Young Man in the Goſpel fooliſhly refuſed to ſell what he had in the world for Chriſt, and will you not refuſe to ſell Chriſt and all your Hopes as to the other world, for the traſh you have here? do not you ſee? do (none) of you ſee how dear they have coſt you, and how low they have brought you as to the

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State of your inward man already? and will you hold on ſtill and never give over till you have loſt all, and all hopes of ever recovering what you have loſt? O be yet adviſed and go no farther on, caſt ye away, caſt ye away your Idols, and yet return to the Lord, and he will return to you.

2. *Our laying hold on the Covenant of God.* We have no other hold on God but his Covenant with us; we had need keep the Covenant of God inviolable, for there's all the hold we have either for this life, or the life to come. And this is the hold that we find this people of *Iſrael* inſiſted upon, *v.* 9. of this Chapter, *Behold, ſee we beſeech thee, we are all thy People*; that is, thy Covenant People. See, we beſeech thee, or remember, O Lord, what hath paſſed betwixt thee and us; thou haſt ſaid, I will be your God, and ye ſhall be my People: And this we find more expreſly pleaded, *Jer.* 14. 7, 8. We have them expoſtulating the caſe, O Lord, *though our iniquities teſtifie againſt us, our backſlidings are many, we have ſinned againſt thee; O thou hope of* Iſrael, *and the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why ſhouldſt thou be a Stranger?* The Lord might have anſwered, Why ſhould I not be a Stranger, when your Sins and your Backſlidings are ſo many? They reply, *v.* 21. Yet *do not abhor us for thy names ſake, do not diſgrace the Throne of thy Glory*: What would the Heathen ſay of God if he ſhould caſt off his People? *Remember, break not thy Covenant with us*; 'tis true, we have broken with thee, but yet remember what thou haſt ſaid, *Pſ.* 89. 31, 32, &c. *If they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, I will viſit their Iniquities with a Rod, and their Sin with Stripes; nevertheleſs my loving kindneſs will I not utterly take from him, nor ſuffer my Faithfulneſs to fail; my Covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my*

Lips: O that's a word of hope; Remember Lord, remember, and break not thy Covenant with us.

Our only hope is the Covenant of God, and this is neceſſary to our laying hold on the Covenant of God, *To repent of our Covenant-breaking, and to renew our Covenant with him, and return to our obedience*

'Tis a vain pleading from the Covenant of God, from the Faithfulneſs of God to his people, if they have been falſe in the Covenant, and will not return; our engaging to *fidelity* to God for the future, and our being faithful to our engagement, this is the ſureſt and our only way to take hold on the Covenant of God.

Friends, you that are backſliders, you have been unfaithful to God, you have broken the Covenant of your Peace; and as to your ſelves, you have hereby taken the moſt effectual courſe to make void the Covenant of God; you have looſened the Almighty from his bond to you; God is far from you (as I may ſo ſpeak) and may never look after you more, but may depart from you for ever, and leave you to periſh in your revoltings: And though God be gracious and abideth faithful, yet unleſs you will come into new bonds with him, and ſo lay hold on his old bond to you, you can expect nothing but that he leave you, and forſake you for ever.

This therefore you have to do for recovery: 1. To acknowledge your unfaithfulneſs to the Lord; Lord, I confeſs I am a Backſlider, and herein am become falſe to thee; I have covenanted to love thee, and to ſerve thee with all mine heart, and with all my might; but wo is me, thou haſt but half an heart from me, mine heart is divided; O how much of it hath this World carried away from God? inſtead of Serving thee with my might, I have been an idle Servant; the Lord forgive me, my buſineſs hath of late lyen another

ther way than about God or my Soul; I have been ſerving my Pride, and my Covetouſneſs; this world hath too much of me, inſomuch that many a time I have even forgotten that I have a God to ſerve; and when I do any thing in the ſervice of God, I do it but by halfs; my ſtrength hath gone out for the world, and wo is me, there hath been but little left for God, but my weakneſs and wearineſs; yea, and though I find the ſad fruit of this my neglect in thoſe waſts that are grown upon me, though I ſee my ſelf become a poor, withered, decayed thing, yet I am not much troubled at it, but am ſtill going on in the ſame buſie life for this Earth, and in the ſame neglect of God: O I have been thus unfaithful, an unfaithful Servant, an unfaithful Steward of the manifold Graces of God; I have ſo waſted my Talents, that I have almoſt nothing left. Thus confeſs unto God your Covenant breakings.

2. *Renew your Covenant and return to your Fidelity.* To repent and not return, is but a mock repentance; to confeſs and not amend, is but a mock confeſſion. Remember that word, *Jer.* 15. 19. *If thou wilt return, I will bring thee again, and thou ſhalt ſtand before me.*

You that confeſs your backſlidings, will you return? you ſee how it hath been and is with you, ſhall it be better for the future? what are your minds for hence forward? are your hearts ſo ſet upon a reviving the work of God, and a recovering out of your carnal, earthly, lazy habit and way, that you are willing to renew your Covenant with God? will you promiſe to the Lord, that through his Grace with you, and the help of his good Spirit, you will henceforth ſet your hearts to be more faithful to him? to follow the Lord fully, to ſtick faſter to your Religion, to be true to God and your Conſcience, and the

Covenant of your God? will you ſo, Friends? will you? O that there were ſuch an heart in you all! This do, and then, though you be gone back from him, yet he will bring you again: Though you be fallen ſo low, yet he will raiſe you up, and you ſhall ſtand before him.

3. *Then truſt upon the Covenant of God*; return to be faithful to him, and he will not leave you nor caſt you off for your former unfaithfulneſs; truſt upon it.

This is your way to take hold of the Covenant of God, and your taking hold of the Covenant, will be your taking hold of God. Friends, after ſuch forſakings and ſuch declinings as many of us are guilty of, there's reaſon enough to be afraid leſt the Lord caſts off ſuch Unfaithful Ones; and there's no hope but he will do ſo, if you thus return not, he will be loſt to you for ever, he will go farther and farther off from you, he will be gracious to you no more, nor accept you nor any of your ſervice, of none of your prayers for your ſelves, no nor of the prayers of any others for you, but will ſay concerning you as once, *Jer.* 14. 11, 12. *Pray not for this people for their good, and when (they) faſt I will not hear their cry, and when they offer an Oblation I will not accept them.* Pray while you will, ſpeak to Miniſters if you will, and to Chriſtians, Pray to the Lord for me, he will not accept your Prayers, nor any others Prayers for you, unleſs you will ſet your hearts to return into faithfulneſs to him.

Friends, I tell you again, you that are in this caſe, and either will not ſee it, nor confeſs your unfaithfulneſs to God, but will ſatisfie your ſelves in your way, and think you are well enough, or at leaſt will excuſe your ſelves, and ſay, your caſe is made worſe than it is; or if you do confeſs it, I was a Backſlider, I have

been

been unfaithful, yet will not renew your Covenant, and return to be faithful, but hold you at the ſame paſs; look for nothing elſe but this, that the Soul of the Lord will be utterly looſened from you, and he will ſay concerning you, Give them a Bill of Divorce and ſend them away; let them alone, let them pine away in their iniquities till they be paſt recovery or redemption. And let me add this farther, if the reſt of the Profeſſors of *England* which are in the ſame caſe will not ſee it, will not confeſs, will not ſpeedily return and recover; what can be expected, but that the Lord, who hath been for theſe many years ſo viſibly departing from us, and after many returns, ſeems at this time again to be removing from us; what can be expected if we ſpeedily repent not, but that he will never return but utterly reject us, and leave us as a dark Land, make us a deſolation and aſtoniſhment, and write his *Ichabod* upon the Doors of our Congregations and Habitations; *The Glory is departed from* England. But if you will yet ſee, and and will confeſs and return, I will ſay to you, as *Shecaniah* ſaid to *Ezra* concerning that revolting people when they were upon reforming, *Ezra* 10. 2. *There is yet hope in* Iſrael *concerning this thing*; There is yet hope in *England* concerning theſe poor Souls, that the Lord will return and continue to dwell in them and among them as in the former days; his Covenant is your hope, lay hold upon it.

3. *Our recovering our Communion with God.* Our Communion with God ſtands much in theſe things.

1. *In our mutual Acquaintance, God with us and we with him.* God is acquainted with his People, and he requires them to come into his Acquaintance, *Job* 22. 21. *Acquaint thy ſelf with God.* Acquaintance ſtands in our Knowledge of God: We cannot be ſaid to be acquainted with them we know not; & in ſuch experimental knowledge as is gotten by converſe

together: We cannot say we are acquainted with every one we know; converse or walking together is necessary to our being acquainted. The nearer and more intimate our Acquaintance with God is, and of the longer continuance by so much the more hold we have of God; God will not easily lose his Acquaintance, and those that are acquainted with God have tasted so much of the sweetness of walking with him, that they will take the more heed how they lose that Acquaintance. Those that are intimately acquainted by their friendly converse together, this Acquaintance knits their Hearts together as *David*'s to *Jonathan*, so that they will not easily be seperated. Hast thou used thy self to intimate converse with God, and thereby gotten into experimental Acquaintance with him? O thine heart will be hereby knit to the Lord, and the Lords Heart knit together with thine. Acquaintance cannot bear strangness; it's grievous to us when our Acquaintants become Strangers to us, and we are unwilling to be strangers from them. Friends, do you suffer your hearts to be estranged from the Lord! can you forget God and keep at a distance from him? can you lose your Intimacy in Heaven? are your delightful thoughts of God restrained, and is not this grievous to you? 'Tis a shrewd sign that God and you were never well acquainted. You that are the Friends of God, keep your acquaintance, take heed of wandrings, take heed of distances and enstrangments; get the experimental delights that arise from your intimacy with him, and that will hold you near him: And you that have lost your Acquaintance, O recover and revive your old Intimacy in Heaven.

2. *In mutual Acceptance.* This is a special part of our Communion with God, our Complacency in God, and his Complacency in us. Acquaintants take

take mutual pleaſure in one another, their company is grateful and acceptable: *God is accepted of his Saints*, they have an hearty goodliking to him, and are glad of his Preſence; not only all the intimations of his Love and Kindneſſes to them, not only ſuch a word ſpoken to their Hearts, *I love thee*, mine Heart is towards thee, thou art mine, the dearly beloved of my Soul, I am at peace with thee, my delight is in thee: O how acceptable, O how pleaſant are ſuch gracious words! but not only theſe, but the manifeſtations of *the Will and Counſels of God to them*; they accept his Commands, they love that the Lord ſhould tell them of their Duty, *His Statutes are my delight*, *Pſ.* 119. 77. and they accept his Rebukes, and Corrections, and his Puniſhments of them for their Sins, *Levit.* 26. 41. knowing that he corrects them in love, and that they cannot want his Chaſtizements, that the very Rebukes of his Countenance are ſometimes as neceſſary for them, and as beneficial to them, as the Light of his Countenance.

2. *They are accepted with God*; he accepts their Perſons: *Epheſ.* 1. 6. *He hath made us accepted in the Beloved*; he accepts their approaches to him. *Ezek.* 20. 40, 41. *In mine Holy Mountain of the height of* Iſrael *there will I accept them*; *I will accept you with your ſweet Savour*. Offer your Offerings, lift up your Voices, pour forth your Prayers, they ſhall be a ſweet Savour, a Savour of Reſt to me.

Now whilſt God finds reſt in a People, he will not depart, *Pſ.* 132. 14. *This is my reſt, here will I dwell for ever*. Acceptance with God, and rejection from God, are ſo contrary, that whilſt we have the one we need not fear the other; and whilſt God is accepted with us, to be ſure we are accepted with him; whilſt Gods ways pleaſe us, our ways will pleaſe the Lord, *Prov.* 16. 7. *When a mans ways pleaſe the*

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Lord, he will make his Enemies be at peace with him; and ſo long we may be ſecure that our Friend will not become our Enemy, but will live in love and continue his abode with us.

3. *In mutual Correſpondence*: In frequent and friendly entercourſes God will be ſending down to his Saints Tokens of his Love,& his Saints will be ſending up Preſents to the Lord, Tokens of their Love to him. There is a *Jacobs* Ladder betwixt Heaven and Earth; this Ladder is Chriſt, by which there is conſtant coming and going: There are Spiritual Bleſſings, the Bleſſings of Grace, the Bleſſings of Peace, that are ſent down from God to his Saints; and there are Spiritual Duties, Holy Affections, Holy Deſires, Holy Prayers and Praiſes, which by the hand of Chriſt are ſent up before the Lord. 'Tis the very Life of Chriſtians, to be either receiving down, or ſending up to Heaven; they muſt hear often from God, or they cannot live; *I will hearken what the Lord God will ſpeak*, Pſ. 85. 8. And whilſt they live, God ſhall hear often from them; there are Meſſengers and Meſſages that paſs daily betwixt God and them: They are often ſending up, and the beſt Preſent they have is their Hearts; *I lift up my Soul to thee*, Pſ. 25. 1. They will be ſending up their Deſires to the Lord, and their Sighs after him; if they have nothing better, they will be ſending up their Tears, and their Sorrows, and their Complaints to the Lord, *Pſ.* 38. 9. *All my deſire is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* Pſ. 56. 8. *Put my Tears into thy Bottle.* If it be well with them, then their Praiſes are ſent up; if they want any thing, then up go their Deſires to the Lord for Supply; if they ail any thing, if they be ſurprized by Sin, ſwallowed up of Sorrow, whatever it be that ails them they pour it out into the Boſom of their Friend. Some-

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Meſſengers or other are daily ſent up, and whatever the Meſſengers be, if it be a Prayer, or a Sigh, or a Tear, this is ſtill the Meſſage, tell him, That I am either ſick of love, or ſick for love, for an Heart to love the Lord.

Such Entercourſes there are betwixt God and his Saints, and theſe are a ſpecial part of their Communion with God, and a ſpecial ſecurity againſt diſtances and enſtrangments betwixt the Lord and them. And it is to be obſerved, That whenever there is a parting betwixt God and Souls, there is a ceſſation or failing of theſe Friendly Entercourſes. Declining Souls, how ſeldom do they look upwards! they are ſo buſie here below, that they have no leiſure, and they grow ſo carnally-minded, that they have no liſt to have much to do with God; they reſtrain Prayer, and reſtrain Holy Meditations; the Lord ſeldom hears from them, and when he does, 'tis ſo coldly and ſo dully, that he can take no pleaſure in it: O Friends, 'tis a ſign that there is a breach betwixt the Lord and you, when you are fallen ſo into a neglect of Spiritual Duties. Do your affections Heavenward flag? do the fervour of your deſires fail? are your Prayers ſhortned and ſtraitned? are you ſo ſeldom, and ſo remiſs, and ſo flat in your retirements to God? can you not ſay, at leaſt, My ſighs and complaints are daily before him, and my groanings are not hid from him? What danger is there that God and your Souls may utterly part, if you have thus loſt your Correſpondence with him?

4. *Often reckoning*; by this our Communion with God, and our Friendſhip with him, is maintained. Often reckoning keeps long Friends; whilſt we keep our Account clear and fair, ſo long there's the leſs danger of a breach: The beſt of Saints run upon ſcore daily; we go upon ſcore for Mercies received from God,

God, and we go upon ſcore for Sins committed againſt God; and where there is ſuch ſcoring, there muſt be often reckoning.

1. *Our ſcore of Mercies ſhould be anſwered in our Praiſes and more abundant Duties*; and a reckoning muſt be kept both of what we have received and what we have returned; of what the Lord hath done for our Souls, and what our Souls have done ever the more for his Name: Thus we ſhould reckon for theſe; O my ſoul, the Lord hath done great things for thee, hath brought thee from darkneſs to light, hath ſaved thy life from death; when thou wert going on in thy ſins, running with the multitude either after thy Covetouſneſs or after thy Companions, in the luſts and in the lewdneſs of thine heart, when thou wert making all the haſte thou couldſt down to Hell, there Grace met thee, and whilſt it let others run on, it ſingled thee out and brought thee back out of that deaths Rode, and hath brought thee into the way of Life, and of a dead Sinner, hath made thee this living Soul. O what a wonder of Mercy was there! and ſince, how many a kindneſs hath it ſhewed thee? how often hath the ſame Grace met thee in the Houſe of God and taught thee, and inſtructed thee, and quickned thee, and comforted thee? how often hath Grace met thee in thine own Houſe, met thee in ſecret, met thee upon thy knees, and hath enlarged thine heart, and helped thee to pour out thy Soul before the Lord, and hath poured in upon thee ſuch a ſenſe of the kindneſs of God to thee, as hath delighted and even raviſhed thine heart? And what great multitudes of other inſtances have there been of the renewed Kindneſſes of the Lord to thee? O to what a reckoning do thy Mercies riſe! haſt thou kept the Account by thee? if thou haſt, what hath been returned in anſwer of the loving kindneſs of the Lord? As

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'twas ſaid concerning *Mordecai* who had ſaved the Kings Life, *Eſther* 6. 3. *What honour and dignity hath been done to* Mordecai *for this?* Canſt not thou ſay, The Lord hath ſaved my life from death, and done for me theſe great things; what honour have I done to the Lord for all this? And if upon thy reckoning made, it be found as 'twas there found in that inſtance, there hath been nothing done, or but little done, then thou wilt ſee that there muſt be more done, or God will be angry.

2. *Our ſcore of ſins ſhould be reckoned up in order to the getting them croſſed by faith in the Blood of Chriſt, and repentance from dead works:* Thus therefore thou ſhouldſt go on; O my Soul, thou ſeeſt what God hath done for thee, but what is it that thou haſt done againſt the God of thy Mercy? how many ſlights haſt thou put upon the Grace of God? how often haſt thou abuſed Mercy? haſt thou not grown ſecure? haſt thou not grown wanton? haſt thou not been haughty and lifted up in the pride of thine Heart? Remember thy frowardneſs and quarrellings, thy backbitings and talebearings; haſt thou no lies, no falſe and fraudulent dealing to put down upon thy account? doſt thou not uſe to play the Hypocrite, and come before the Lord with ſuch an hollow heart and ſuch hollow duties, as if thou meanſt to mock him to the face? art thou not either a backſlider, or a loyterer? if thou haſt not loſt ground and fallen backward, yet haſt thou not loſt time and not gone on forward? haſt thou no ſlothfulneſs, and negligence, and non-proficiency to write down againſt thy ſelf? haſt thou not ſomewhat againſt thy ſelf for thy covetouſneſs and over-eagerneſs upon the World? haſt thou no wrongs of thy conſcience to be remembred? doſt not find much of theſe and many more evils that thou art run in ſcore with thy God for? and what hath

there

there hitherto been done for the crossing out of the score? Sure if thou goest on thus, thou art like to hear of him in another way than thou wouldst, or it may be not hear from him at all. Beloved, the keeping good reckoning betwixt the Lord and us being of so great importance and so necessary to the continuing his presence and favour with us, I shall give you some short directions concerning it.

1. *Let every one especially look to his own personal reckoning.* We must reckon for our people also, how great things God hath done for our Nation and his Churches amongst us; and how great have been the sins of our People: What have our Princes and our Priests, what have our Magistrates and our Ministers done? What have the Sins of Congregations, of our Neighbours, of our Families been? We are, as Members of the same Body, concerned in all these, and therefore must keep a publick reckoning: But our special reckoning which we must most insist upon, must be our own personal reckoning. Concerning our Mercies we must say as the Psalmist, *Ps.* 66. 16. *Come, and I'll tell,* and reckon up, *what the Lord hath done for (my) Soul.* For our Sins, we must say to our selves, what *Israel* was rebuked for not saying, *Jer.* 8. 6. *What have I done? there's no man that repented nor said, What have I done?* May be we may some of us be telling too much what others have done; the Sins of Princes and great Ones, the Faults of our Neighbours and Acquaintance may be too much in our Mouths; though they be not so much as they should be upon our Hearts, yet our Tongues will run and catch up every evil report, and be spreading it abroad, making it our ordinary talk and discourse, raking up all the evil news we can hear in the Town or Country, as if we were the very Sinks to gather in all the Filth of the Places we live in, and then casting back

back the ſtink of it in our diſcourſes. This is a wicked practice, which I have more than once warned you of; and O that it were avoided and amended. But whileſt we vainly talk, what hath this man or that woman done? how fooliſhly, how proudly, how frowardly, have they behaved themſelves? O how very ſeldom is it that we mind our own reckoning? Lord, what have I done? O my Soul, what haſt thou done? Here our chief buſineſs lies, to mind and make our own perſonal reckoning. *Let every man prove his own work*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Gal.*6.4. Let every man ſearch his own heart, let every man obſerve and take an account of his own ways and goings.

2. *Do not under reckon.* Do not careleſly or deceitfully skip over any of your faults: make a plain and perfect account; deal faithfully betwixt God and your Souls: be not like the unjuſt Steward, *Luke* 16. when there's fifty or an hundred owing for, do not take your bill and write down but twenty, or but ten; do not ſay to your ſelves as the Lord to the Church in *Pergamos*, *Rev.*2.14. *I have a few things againſt thee*: a few ſmall faults I have. God may have many things, and great things againſt you, and if you will reckon truly, you may find many and great things againſt your ſelves.

3. *Level your accounts.* 1. For your mercies that you have received: the way to level them is to ſee to it, that ye walk worthy of all the mercies of God, and that you receive none of the grace of God in vain. Let it not ſuffice you that you live better lives then ſinners, that have received no ſuch mercies as you have; *I thank God I am not as this Publican*, no nor as this Phariſee; I am no lewd Liver nor no proud Hypocrite; ſhall that ſuffice you? You may be as neither of theſe, and yet God may have much againſt you, that you

are no better then you are. You ought to live up to all the light you have received, to the love you have tasted of, to the experiences you have had of the manifold kindnesses and compassions of the Lord to your souls. There are some of you that God hath done more for, and bestowed more upon, more knowledge, more helps, more grace, then upon multitudes of weaker Christians: your life must be as much above the ordinary rank, your care, and your zeal, and your diligence, and your faithfulness, must be as much above the lower sort of Christians as you have been set above them in what you have received. Some of you will not say, but the Lord hath been abundantly gracious to you; he hath not done by every Christian as he hath done by me, his grace hath abounded, his kindnesses have abounded, O how deeply hath my soul tasted how gracious the Lord is! And what should you hereupon say further? O this you should say, What shall I render? how should I live? Study, O my soul, to walk worthy of all this grace; O let me have my conversation in Heaven; let my conversation be in (all things) as it becometh the Gospel: let me be holy, harmless, lively, fruitful, that I may shew forth the vertues of him that hath called me out of darkness into his (marvellous) light. God hath been marvellously gracious to me, he hath shewed me marvellous loving kindness, he that is mighty hath done for me great things; help, Lord, help me, O my God; that as thou hast made me such an instance of thy great mercy, so I may become an instrument of thy greater praise.

2. *For your sins, the way to level the reckoning for them is by getting the scores to be crossed*, and having them all blotted and struck out of your account. Get them crossed, 1. By repentance, *Acts* 3. 19. *Repent ye ------that your sins may be blotted out.* Whatever sins you

you find upon your account, there they muſt ſtand againſt you till by repentance they are blotted out. Repentance is the waſhing us from our ſins, and till they be waſhed out of your lives, they will never be blotted out of your book. Fall upon repentance every one of you; have you lived an earthly and worldly life? O repent that you have. Have you been proud, or ſelf-conceited, or ſelf-willed, of a froward & a contentious ſpirit? O let your ſouls and all that is within you ſay, It repents me, I am grieved at the heart, that ever I have been ſuch a wretch. Have you under all your profeſſions of Chriſt lived a carnal, careleſs, heedleſs, idle, unſavoury, unprofitable life? what ſhould you ſay? O it repents me that I have been no more ſpiritual, and diligent, and ſavoury, and uſeful in my generation. Repent and reform, repent and amend; let it grieve you at the heart, that you have loſt ſo much time, that you have lived to ſo little purpoſe, that you have been ſuch barren vines, ſuch fruitleſs figtrees, in the vineyard of the Lord: and now let your root ſpring forth, let your branches ſhoot up, let your buds and bloſſoms appear, and grow up to more fruitfulneſs: this is repentance, and nothing ſhort of this. Amend your ways, come you to a better life, a more holy and heavenly life, that's the way to have all your former ſinfulneſs and unfruitfulneſs blotted out.

2. *By faith in the bloud of Chriſt.* 'Tis not your own tears that will waſh away your ſins, 'tis onely the bloud of Chriſt, 1 *John* 1.7. your iniquities muſt not onely be purged, but be pardoned too; whatever repentance may do towards it, 'tis the bloud of Chriſt, and faith in his bloud, that muſt both get them purged and pardoned. Do not onely ſay, *If I have done iniquity, I hope I ſhall do ſo no more:* I hope through the grace of God I ſhall never live as I have lived: but

beſides this you muſt get your pardon for what you have done. Now this is your way to level your accounts concerning your ſins, to repent and amend all your evils, and to ſue out your pardon through Faith in the bloud of Chriſt.

And now you ſee what 'tis to lay hold on God; *to continue his preſence with us*, by caſting away our Idols, by laying hold on his Covenant, by recovering into Communion, getting into an holy acquaintance with God, living ſo that you will both accept of God, and be accepted with him, maintaining a frequent entercourſe betwixt the Lord and your ſouls, letting him hear often from you, and liſtening and longing to hear as often from him; by keeping even reckonings betwixt the Lord and you, keeping a reckoning of your mercies and a reckoning of your ſins, by levelling your accounts, by walking worthy of your mercies, by getting the ſcores of your ſins croſſed, waſhed away by repentance, and pardoned by the bloud of Chriſt. Here's that you have to do, if you would take hold of God, and continue his preſence with you.

Friends, is the Lord within you? I hope he is in many of you; would you that he abide and continue with you? I know you would; you that are Chriſtians, I know you would all ſay, Wo to me if the Lord depart from me. I know it is the deſire of every ſincere heart among you, let the Lord dwell in me, and walk in me, as he hath ſaid he will; let Chriſt dwell in mine heart by faith; Lord, leave me not, take not thy Holy Spirit from me; if all the Friends I have in the world forſake me, if all the comforts I have under Heaven fail me, if mine houſe muſt go, and mine eſtate go, and my health go, and my life go, yet let not the Lord depart from me; let the Lord ſtill dwell in my ſoul, dwell in me as my Teacher and Inſtructor, dwell in me as my governour and my guide, dwell in me as my portion and treaſure, dwell in me as

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my Refuge and Protector; let but the Lord God continue with me, and influence me by his Grace, and quicken me by his Spirit, and guide me by his Counſels, and hold me by his Right Hand, and lift up the light of his Countenance upon me, and ſo long mine heart ſhall be glad, and my glory ſhall rejoyce, my fleſh alſo ſhall reſt in hope, in this hope, that he will ſhew me the Path of Life, I ſhall behold his Face in Righteouſneſs, and when I awake I ſhall be ſatisfied with his Likeneſs. Why is this your mind? is this your deſire that it may be thus with you? why now you know what you have to do that it may be ſo.

Beloved, you have much the more reaſon to hearken to theſe Inſtructions, and hereby to ſecure the continuance of the Lord in your own hearts, in ſuch a time as this, wherein there are ſo many tokens of his being about to depart out of our Congregations, to ſhut up the Doors of his Houſe againſt us. O how will it be, if when the days ſhall come wherein we ſhall loſe our opportunities of meeting the Lord in the Congregation? how very ſad will it be, if we ſhould in ſuch a time not find him within us, if the Word of the Lord ſhould be thruſt out from his Houſe, and the Spirit of the Lord ſhould be withdrawn from our Hearts; if with our publick communion we ſhould loſe our ſecret communion; if inſtead of finding comfort in our retirements to God, he ſhould hide his Face from our Souls; if inſtead of ſpeaking comfortably, he ſhould ſpeak roughly to us; if this ſhould be his Word to us in ſuch a day, *Now ſee what thou haſt done*, now remember thy wantonneſs and thy worldlineſs, thy hypocriſie and thy backſlidings, and triflings out thy day of grace; of theſe things thou haſt been warned aforehand, but wouldſt not lay them to heart, and now reap the fruit of thy folly; think not to have countenance from me, and comfort from me, in the day

of diſtreſs, whom thou haſt ſo mocked and ſlighted in thy proſperity: If men be angry let them be angry, if men will perſecute, let them perſecute, and look for no relief from me. O what if the Lord ſhould ſpeak thus to any of your Souls in the days of darkneſs that may come, how dreadful dark will it then be! or what if he ſhould ſay nothing, but leave thee a blind, and hardned, and ſenſeleſs Soul, waſting away and growing worſe and worſe, and not at all affected with his ſevere providences? How if it ſhould be thus! O Friends, that this may not be your caſe, that God ſhould depart from his Houſe and your Souls together; know that you are ſo much the more concerned to give ſpecial heed to the Inſtructions you have received for the laying ſuch hold upon him, that he may continue with your hearts if he ſhould not be intreated, but depart from his Houſe and Congregations.

4. *Stirring Religion will take hold of God*: What might have been ſaid to this is in great part prevented by what hath been ſaid already, yet ſomething I ſhall add and ſhew.

1. *What's meant by ſtirring Religion.*

2. *That ſtirring Religion will continue the Preſence of God with us.*

1. *What's meant by ſtirring Religion.* 1. *Negatively*, not headineſs in Religion, an hot and miſtaken Zeal about the lower and more uncertain things of Religion; not ſuch a Spirit of Fire which was in thoſe Diſciples, *Luke* 9. 54. who would needs call for Fire from Heaven to deſtroy and conſume thoſe that were not Followers of them; not a ſtirring up of ſtrife and contention, a making breaches and diviſions, and propagating of our own Opinions by cenſuring and judging thoſe that are otherwiſe minded, and are not in every thing according to our own Size:

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Such as theſe are ſome of thoſe perilous perſons which the Apoſtle warns Chriſtians not to imitate, but to take heed of; of whom he ſays, 2 *Tim.* 3. 2. they are *Proud*, *Boaſters*, *Falſe Accuſers*, or make-bates, *fierce*, *deſpiſers of them that are good*, *heady*, *highminded*, and after all their bluſtering againſt others, *have but a form of Godlineſs*, *denying the power thereof*; *from ſuch*, ſays he, *turn away*, take heed of them, and take heed of being leavened with ſuch a Spirit. This then, this headineſs, and fierceneſs, and hot cenſoriouſneſs upon the account of Religion, this is not the ſtirring Religion I mean.

2. *Poſitively*. An humble, active, lively, zealous proſecuting or purſuing that which is Religion indeed, or the ſubſtance of ſincere Chriſtianity. Some vain ones there are, who upon the hearing this headineſs and fierceneſs, this hot and miſtaken zeal blamed and decryed, will turn the edge of ſuch Reproofs againſt Godly Zeal, and all fervour and activity for God; and every one that goes beyond the drowſie ſleepy multitude of Profeſſors, is cried out againſt, as one of theſe heady highminded ones. Such is the craft of the Devil, that if he cannot blow up coals of wildfire, that under the pretence of kindling will devour all ſerious godlineſs; if he cannot make men hot and heady in the propagating their own fancies, will then on the other hand quench and cool that genuine fervency of ſpirit wherein we ought to ſerve the Lord: If he cannot make men heady, he will do what he can to make them heartleſs, and cold, and lukewarm, in all the matters of God.

Friends, take heed of both theſe extreams, of being heady or fierce on the one hand, or of being cold or lukewarm on the other: Of heady ones, God would have us take heed and turn away from them, and for

lukewarm ones, he will ſpue them out of his Mouth, *Rev.* 3. 16.

The ſtirring Religion I mean is as I ſaid before, a lively activity of Soul for God, and for the advancing in real Godlineſs. A ſtirring Spirit is oppoſite to a drowſie, ſleepy, ſlothful, careleſs Spirit, which is nothing moved by all that the Scripture ſpeaks, when it preſſeth us to be *fervent in ſpirit*, *ſerving the Lord*, Rom. 12. 11. To *be zealous and amend*, Rev. 3. 19. *To contend for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, Jude 3. *To ſtrive to enter in at the ſtrait Gate*, Luke 13. 24. To be violent and force our ſelves on in the way of the Kingdom, *Mat.* 11. 12. To fight, to wreſtle, to run, to make haſte to be fruitful in good works, and the like; after all theſe preſſing and quickning words, there are a ſort of ſlow Bellies, ſleepy, lazy Profeſſors, who will but creep on when God would have them run, who will lye down & laze and loyter out their time, when they ſhould be fervent in Spirit; who will be idle when they ſhould work, be ſilent when they ſhould ſpeak; who let their lazy hearts alone to their own ſlow & eaſie pace, and ſo are over-grown with ruſt and ſuffer their Religion to be even ſtrangled and chok'd up by their fleſh to which they ſo much indulge.

This ſtirring Religion is the oppoſite to ſuch a ſleepy heartleſs way of Religion, *a blowing up the coals* which God hath kindled in us; as *Timothy* is exhorted, 2 *Tim.* 1. 6. *Stir up the (Gift) of God.* The word is, Blow up the Coals; ſo Chriſtians are to ſtir up the *Grace* of God within them.

I need ſay the leſs here, becauſe I have told you ſo much of it already. It is our being awakened, and putting on vigorouſly upon that ſavory, ſolid, fruitful Religion which I have already inſtructed you in.

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Whatever Holy Principles we have received and ſucked in from the Word of God, whatever Holy Habits or Diſpoſitions have been begotten and wrought into our Hearts by the Spirit of God; have we any thing of the ſaving knowledge of God, have we Faith, have we the Fear of God or any Love to the Lord Jeſus? theſe muſt be all ſet on work and held to their work, that ſo the Knowledge of God may bring forth the Life of God; that the Habit of Faith may bring forth a Life of Faith; that the Love of Chriſt and the fear of the Lord may conſtrain us and provoke us to walk on in the Law of our God; that the light that is ſet up within us may break forth and make our Paths to ſhine; and not only ſo, but that the Holy Fire that's kindled and blown up in our Hearts, may bring forth *a Zeal of God* in our Lives; that we may be Chriſtians, and Chriſtians in earneſt; buſie for God, buſie for our Souls, ſtriving againſt Sin, and ſtriving for the Maſtery, fighting againſt Sin, and fighting to the Victory; ready to every good work and fruitful in good works, doing what we can to rouſe up this ſleepy World, to raiſe up the Tabernacle of *David* that is fallen, and helping on and building up one another in our moſt Holy Faith; laying out our ſtrength in following the Lord, and laying hold every one on the Skirts of his Brother, and leading them on with us; living in love, and all the fruits of Chriſtian love; and hereby adorning our Holy Profeſſion, and walking worthy the Lord unto all pleaſing; this is that which I mean by ſtirring Religion.

2. *Stirring Religion will continue the Preſence of God with us*; for,

1. *It will work out and drive away whatever offends or would provoke God to depart*: God will never depart without cauſe; it muſt be a great matter that muſt

muſt part ſuch dear Friends as God and the Souls of his Saints: God will never depart from his People till there be ſome ſin entertain'd, and lov'd, and allow'd, that bids him depart. Every ſin ſays to the Lord as thoſe wicked ones, *Job* 21. 14. who *ſaid to the Almighty, depart from us*; but though every ſin ſays thus, yet God will not hearken to its voice unleſs it be *an allowed ſin* that's ſuffered to have the command in the heart and life. Sin ſays to the Lord, Depart, God ſhall not rule here; and if thou be of the mind that that Sin ſhall ſtay with thee notwithſtanding, if thou art willing to entertain ſuch a Traitor however, if thou hadſt rather venture the diſpleaſing and diſobliging of God than have thy Sin caſt out, this the Lord will not bear, away he will. God ſays concerning every ſin, *If ye love me, let theſe go their way*; let this Pride go, let this Covetouſneſs go, let this Frowardneſs go; if thou ſayeſt, O with all mine heart, Lord, I would be glad with all my Soul to be rid of them; but wo is me, they are too hard for me, my luſts will dwell in me, and work in me, and hinder me in my work for God do what I can; O my Soul would rejoyce to be well rid of them; O that I might never be proud, or froward, or carnal, or earthly-minded any more: I know it is an offence to the Lord, and ſure it is a grief of mind to me, that any thing that offends ſhould abide with me; and though I cannot conquer them, yet through the help of God I will not foſter them whilſt I live. If theſe Sons of the Bondwoman muſt dwell with me, yet through the help of the Lord they ſhall never dwell in peace with me while I live: if thou ſayeſt thus, and ſayeſt truly, and wilt ſtand to thy word, God will not depart from thee. God will not depart for *unallowed reſiſted ſins*: If whilſt thy ſin ſays to the Lord, Depart from me, thy Soul ſays to thy Sin, Depart thou rather; God will hearken

to

to the voice of thy Soul rather than to the voice of thy Sin. Thy Sin ſays to the Lord, Depart; but if thy Soul ſay, Lord let me be looſed from my Sins but ſtay thou with me; God will not depart from thee: But every allowed Sin, every loved Luſt and Corruption that thou wilt not hear of parting with; if thou art of a proud heart, and art reſolved to maintain thy Pride, if thou art of a Covetous Earthly Heart and Life, and wilt not hear of giving off from thy Covetouſneſs, if thou art carnal, and fooliſh, and froward, *&c.* and wilt continue ſo, then look to thy ſelf, God will not ſtay with ſuch a Soul; what, love your pleaſures more than God? what, love this World more than God? even take them for me, ſays the Lord, I'll be no more a God to them. This is the firſt, every allowed ſin provokes God to depart.

2. *Stirring Religion will work out ſin, eſpecially every allowed ſin.* The life of a Chriſtian is a warfare, there is a continual conflict betwixt the fleſh and ſpirit, *Gal.* 5. 17. The Fleſh luſteth---- luſteth, that is, fighteth; ſin fighteth againſt grace, and grace fighteth againſt ſin. Sin fights for the Devil to ſet him up, and to lay the governement on his Shoulder; and grace fights for God to lift the Lord up, and to give him the preheminence in the Soul. God will no longer ſtay in the heart than he may have the preheminence; God will not be kept as an underling, if he may not have the preheminence, he'll be gone and leave you to the Devil; never talk that you hope God is within you, where Sin or the World bears rule, God is not there.

Now where the fleſh is let alone in its fight againſt grace, much more where the heart takes part with the fleſh, and nouriſheth, and cheriſheth, and maketh proviſion for it, and grace is let lye aſleep, there ſin riſes, and increaſes, and abounds both in heart

heart and life. Where ſin is ſtirring, and that little grace that is, is let lye and quite out of heart, what can be expected, how can it be otherwiſe but the Devil muſt carry it againſt God? But when grace revives, and the heart falls off from ſin, and takes part with grace, nouriſhing, and cheriſhing, and abetting the better part, then ſin will be put to it and muſt away. Chriſtians, your hearts would quickly be too hot for your ſins, if the grace that is in you be once well rouzed up; when the live Coals are blown up into a Flame, the Smoke is conſumed and vaniſheth.

Do not ſluggiſhly lye down and complain that you cannot maſter your ſins; you are proud and cannot help it, you are earthly, and worldly, and cannot help it; you are froward, and paſſionate, and peeviſh, and cannot overcome your paſſions: Do not ſay, you cannot overcome, you cannot prevail; if there be grace in your hearts and you will ſet to it; to ſtir up the grace that is in you, this would overcome. What do you think if your love to Chriſt were blown up into a flame, would it not quench the flame of luſt? Friends, 'tis a ſign that religion is aſleep, grace is aſleep, conſcience is aſleep, when your carnality and earthlineſs do thus ride in triumph over you; this little *David*, that little good thing that is within you, if it gets on its Armour and go forth to the fight, will not only put to flight, but put to death the Champion of the Philiſtines: Put your grace to it, let it but engage heartily and lively in the fight, and ſin will run the field.

Loytering, and idleneſs, and lazineſs do beget and nouriſh evil humours and diſeaſes; exerciſe and activity will ſubdue and work them out; he that lives a ſtirring life, is uſually the moſt ſtrong and healthful.

Chriſti-

Chriſtians, if you would be hearty and healthful and overcome thoſe corruptions that are the diſeaſes of your Souls, and the offence of your God, if you would overcome, reſolve upon a ſtirring life; pray, and let no praying ſatisfie, but ſtirring prayer; ſleepy prayers will ſtand you in no ſtead; let your thoughts be ſtirring, let your affections be ſtirring, let conſcience be ſtirring, let your converſations be ſtirring converſations; be not the carkaſes of Chriſtians that have no life, ſhew forth the Spirit of Chriſtianity as much as poſſible; be all ſoul, and life, and ſpirit, and keep you in lively action, and then let your ſins ſtand before yov if they can. The quick running Rivers keep themſelves pure, they are the dead and ſtanding Pools that gather moſt mud and dirt. Certainly, Friends, our Skie would be clearer and more ſerene, if our Spirits as the Wind did riſe higher. Our thick Miſts and unwholeſome Fogs that infeſt and annoy us would much be diſpelled, if Grace (the rays of the Sun of Righteouſneſs) did once break forth more in us. What will ye do, Friends! your light grows dim, and your day miſty, your waters are mudded, we are a company of dark ſouls, polluted ſouls, ſuch as the Lord can take little pleaſure in; what muſt ye do to help it? if you will beſtir your ſelves you may help all; get Religion to be aflote, let that living ſtream be running, let the coals be blowing, and then you ſhall ſee your mud will be cleanſed, and your droſs will be purged away. Never think 'twill be better by ſitting ſtill and complaining how bad 'tis: To work, Friends, to work with theſe lazy hearts, to work with thoſe earthly minds; rouze ye up out of ſleep, up and be doing, and ſee if you find not the ſame ſucceſs againſt your ſins as the Lord promiſed againſt the Devil, *Jam.* 4. 7. *Reſiſt the Devil and he ſhall fly from you*; reſiſt Sin, and it ſhall fall under you.

Now

Now Friends, if ye can but get your ſins out, if ye can ſubdue your iniquities ſo far, as that not one of them be allowed, and all of them have their power broken and weakned in you; if thoſe that are by a ſpecialty (your) iniquities, if your ſpecial ſins, your moſt beloved luſts, thoſe that have moſt of all taken with you, and carried your hearts captive, thoſe evils that have been your ſpecial hinderances either in holineſs or comfort, and that your hearts have been moſt apt to go a whoring after, if you get theſe to be mortified and brought under, (ſtirring Religion will do it) get it to be done once, let nothing be left that offends God, but that it alſo offends you, and you ſhall not be like to have reaſon to complain the Lord is departed from me, that which would have driven him away is now removed.

2. *Stirring Religion will work up, and improve, and increaſe thoſe good things, which the Lord will delight in, and will not forſake.* As it will work out iniquity, ſo it will work up grace and holineſs. There is not the pooreſt and weakeſt of Saints, but by diligence and induſtry will be improved. Stirring Chriſtians will be thriving Chriſtians: 'tis for want of action and induſtry that our ſouls are in this poor caſe. As they ſaid *Gen.*43.10. *Except we had lingred we had returned the ſecond time*, or twice by this time. Friends, if we had not lingered and loitered, we might have had twice ſo much grace, twice ſo much holineſs as now we have: 'tis our lingering that keeps us ſo poor; we may thank our ſloth and our careleſneſs that there is ſo little of God in us: by our induſtry we ſhall advance. Stirring lively Chriſtians will be thriving Chriſtians: the beſt of Chriſtians can never keep their ſtand, much leſs increaſe their ſtore, without diligence; and the leaſt of Saints ſhall not be always at a ſtand if they will be diligent; and whileſt your ſouls flouriſh in

grace

grace, the Lord will never leave you nor forſake you. The more you have of the grace and holineſs of God in you, the more the Lord hath to loſe; the more gracious ones the Lord hath in a Nation, the more he hath to loſe among that people; and the more grace there is in any ſoul, the more he hath to loſe if that ſoul ſhould miſcarry; the greater treaſure the Lord hath in your hearts, the cloſer guard will he keep about it that it be not loſt. You whoſe religion hath ſo abounded, that your ſouls are filled with the fruits of religion, fear not, God will ſtand at your right hand, he will not loſe ſuch a treaſure. If you make the Moſt High your habitation, and keep his habitation clean and well furniſhed, he will delight to dwell with you. Never any gracious ſoul, that made it his work to pleaſe the Lord, could ever ſay (unleſs upon a miſtake) the Lord hath forſaken me. Upon a miſtake ſome of his moſt precious ones may ſay ſo, and have ſaid ſo: *Pſ.*77.6,7. *I communed with mine own heart, and my ſpirit made diligent ſearch*; what was it he ſearched for? why, he ſearched what was become of his God: he ſaid to his ſoul, as once his enemy ſaid to him in reproach, *Where is thy God?* he ſearched for God, but could not find him; and thereupon concluded, as appears by the following verſe, the Lord was departed from him, and had caſt him off; for, ſays he, *Will the Lord caſt off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? is his mercy clean gone? hath God forgotten to be gracious?* This was his thought he had; God had left and forgotten him: but this was his miſtake, and ſo he ſaw and ſaid afterwards, *v.* 10. *This is my infirmity* to think ſo, I was miſtaken: God was with him ſtill, though at preſent he hid his face. Keep cloſe to God, keep up the holineſs of God, and God will never be gone: if he ſhould at any time hide his face whileſt you are walking uprightly before him,

and

and your heart ſhould whiſper to you, God is departed, give check to ſuch a thought, and ſay as the Pſalmiſt did, this is my infirmity, this is my miſtake, the Lord is ſtill with me, and holdeth me by his right hand; and this I do and will believe, though yet I ſee him not. He hath ſaid, *The Lord is with you while you are with him*; and how ſad ſoever it be with me, yet I thank the Lord mine heart is with him; to him is all my deſire, in him is all my delight, my conſcience witneſſeth with me, that this is my great care, that I may pleaſe and walk with him; and having this witneſs, that my ſoul is with God, this is my confidence that the Lord is ſtill with my ſoul.

5. *How we ſhould ſtir up our ſelves.* To the directions I have hitherto occaſionally given, I ſhall adde theſe that follow.

1. *Make your advantage of ſtirring providences.*
2. *Put you upon ſtirring thoughts.*
3. *Get you ſtirring affections.*
4. *Get you ſtirring conſciences.*
5. *Be much converſant in ſtirring ſociety.*
6. *Be much exerciſed in ſtirring duties.*

1. *Make your advantage of ſtirring providences,* times of trouble and affliction and perſecution, eſpecially ſuch troubles as threaten an eclipſe, if not the putting out the light of the Goſpel, ſuch afflicting threatning providences are awakening providences; and that upon a double account:

1. *As they are ſigns of a ſtorm coming.*
2. *As they are tokens of a night approaching.*

1. *As they are ſigns of a ſtorm coming.* When workmen in the fields lie loitering or aſleep under the cocks, if they eſpy a ſtorm riſing, then they are all up, and every man falls to his work, that they may diſpatch before the ſtorm falls, and they be beaten out of

of the field. Is there no fear of ſuch a Storm? there is a double ground of fear of a Storm coming at this day.

1. *May we not ſee a ſtorm in the angry Face of God?*

2. *May we not ſee a ſtorm in the dark providences of God?*

1. *May we not ſee a ſtorm in the angry face of God*, who is ſo provoked by us? Do you think you may provoke God at the rate that ſo many of us have done, as by our manifold iniquities, ſo by our ſo little anſwering the Calls of the Goſpel, to repentance and recovering our ſelves out of that wretched ſtate we are in, and yet God not be angry? *Prov.* 1. 24, 28. *Becauſe I have called and ye refuſed, therefore you ſhall call and I will not anſwer.* If we be ſo hard of hearing when God calls, God will in anger be gone out of hearing when we call upon him. God hath been calling to ſinners, and calling upon the Profeſſors amongſt us, and what anſwer hath there been either of the one or the other? Hath not the Goſpel called upon ſinners to come in and be converted, and what anſwer is there of this call? Sinners, how many are there among you who after all that God hath ſpoken, yet will not anſwer? Drunkards, you have been called from your drunkenneſs, called from the Alehouſe, called from your Companions, but are you come away? have you caſt them off and forſaken them? Yea, every blind and impenitent ſinner among you, you have all been called upon to ſeek the knowledge of God, to ſeek after the grace of God, to come to Chriſt, to be his hearty Diſciples, to become new Creatures, to ſeek the Kingdom of God, and to eſcape out of the ſnares of the Devil: And yet there you lie, a company of blind, hardned, ſenſleſs ſouls, even as if you had never been preached to; if we had

been calling to the Rocks and the Mountains; if we had been calling to the dead that are rotting in their Graves; if we had been preaching to the skulls and bones of those that have been long since dead and rotten, we might even have seen as much success of our word upon these bones, and mountains, and rocks, as we do see upon multitudes of impenitent ones. Have you not heard? do you not see that it is even just thus, and yet is not God angry? Dost thou not hear that word in thine ears, *Jam.* 5. 9. Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord, shall not my Soul be avenged on such a Nation as this?

2. And what answer is there of the calls of the Gospel upon Professors? The Gospel that hath call'd you in to Christ, hath also call'd you on after him. The Gospel that hath call'd you to the Profession of Christianity, hath call'd you also to come on to the power of Christianity; hath call'd you from your indifferency, from your hypocrisie, from your backslidings, to a lively fruitfulness in Religion; and what answer is there of these Calls upon you? Are you awakened? are you revived? have all the words that have been of late spoken to you, have they prospered? have they prevailed upon you? have they gotten any heat in you, which before were cold? have they brought your Religion to life again, which was almost dead? or have these stirring words stirred you so much as to say to your selves, Well, I must no longer hold me in this wretched case; I must, and through the help of God, I will set all my might and all my power on work to recover out of this case. What say you, Friends, is there any comfortable success of this kind that you see and feel upon you? I hope there is something done upon some of you: But how many Professors are there upon whom just no-

nothing is done? they ſtill ſtick in the mud, and the mire, and will not come forth.

What do you think that theſe ſo many and ſo viſible neglects of the Calls of the Goſpel are like to bring forth? Look towards the Lord; do you not ſee a ſtorm in his Face? do you not verily believe that God is angry, and angry with (thy) Soul, who art one of theſe impenitent ſinners or hardned backſliders? Is not God angry? Thou art a blind Soul indeed, that either canſt not ſee that God is angry, where there are ſo great provokings, or that there is a ſtorm coming where God is angry.

2. *May we not ſee a Storm coming in the dark Providences of God?* Are not the winds riſen, the clouds gathering; yea and hath it not begun to drop? The Proverb is, *'Tis a ſign 'twill rain, when it begins already.* The counſels and deſigns that have been laid by the adverſaries, and the violent purſuance of them, and what hath been already brought forth: The ſad things that we ſee and hear, do they not threaten a ſtorm? and ſuch a ſtorm as may raiſe a floud to ſweep away thoſe advantages of the Goſpel which yet have been left us? Is there a ſtorm coming? then ſure we had need beſtir our ſelves before it ſo overtake as to overwhelm us. O let us forthwith anſwer the Calls of God, whilſt yet he continues to call. Sinners, beſtir your ſelves, and get you into Chriſt out of hand; let not the ſtorm find you, where the thunder and the hail found the hardy amongſt the *Egyptians*, *Exod.* 9. 19. Let it not find you without, haſten into Chriſt, leſt your lot be as theirs, to be deſtroyed and to periſh. Profeſſors beſtir you your ſelves; get you nearer to Chriſt, keep you cloſer to Chriſt, ſtand ye upon the Rock, and ſtand faſt there, get you in the Ark, and keep you there; and fear, leſt if you keep

you at this diſtance, and in theſe wandrings, the floud come and ſweep you alſo away.

2. *Threatning troubles are ſtirring providences, as they are tokens of a Night approaching, that 'tis almoſt night*: What a ſtirring Providence this is, will appear if we conſider the properties of Night. Theſe are,

1. *Night is dark.*
2. *Night is cold.*
3. *Night is a time of ſilence.*
4. *Night is a time of ſleep.*
5. *Night is no time of work.*

1. *Night is dark.* Night is the dark part of our time, both are joyned together as ſignifying the ſame thing, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 5. *Children of Night and of Darkneſs.* 'Tis the dark that makes it night, as 'tis the light, the Sun light, that makes it day. When the Sun is ſet, the Sun of Righteouſneſs that ſhines forth in the Goſpel, (the light of the Goſpel being the very Sun beams of Chriſt) when this Sun is ſet, what darkneſs, ſpiritual darkneſs follows? Thoſe parts of the World where the Goſpel is not, nor Chriſt hath appeared, they are *the dark places* of the Earth; and whenever the light of the Goſpel is removed from thoſe parts where it hath ſhined, darkneſs overſpreads them.

2. *Night is cold.* The light of the Sun hath heat going with it; as the Sun withdraweth, it grows cold. It was given by Chriſt, as a ſign of night approaching on *Jeruſalem*, *Mat.* 24. 12. *The love of many ſhall grow cold.* As the Sun grows low the cold increaſes; and if when it is but almoſt night, much more when night hath overtaken us, when its darkneſs hath overſpread us, that's the cold part of our time. What ever heats there are now upon our Spirits any of us, 'tis to be doubted how cold we may

grow

grow when night overtakes us. If the love of ſo many, if the religion of ſo many of us be waxen ſo cold already, when it is but almoſt night, it ſhould make us tremble to conſider, how much colder we are like to grow, when it comes to be quite night with us.

3. *Night is a time of ſilence.* The ſilent night 'tis often called: Thoſe that now ſpeak to you, and call upon you to keep you waking, the night that's coming upon us may ſilence them, and not ſuffer them to ſpeak any more to you. *Rev.* 8. 1. 'tis ſaid, that at the opening the 7*th* Seal, *there was ſilence in Heaven*; that is, ſay ſome, there was no Word or Revelation came to *John* for ſome time: What that ſilence in Heaven meant, though it be hard to determine, yet ſure, when there's ſilence on Earth, when the Watchmen muſt be ſilent and hold their peace, that's a ſad and diſmal time.

4. *Night is a time of ſleep*: 1 *Theſ.* 5. 7. *They that ſleep, ſleep in the night.* That's like to be the unhappineſs of people, that whatever be the miſeries of a ſpiritual night, they are like to fall aſleep under all, to be without ſenſe of their unvaluable loſs; it will leave men ſtupid and ſenſleſs Souls. You that do not prize nor improve the Goſpel light, this is like to be your caſe; when it's gone, you will not bewail its loſs, but your Souls will fall aſleep. O if you be ſuch ſleepy Souls whilſt you have the light with you, if the word of the Goſpel will not waken you, what a deep ſleep will the want of the Goſpel bring upon you? Friends, you have need rouze you up every one of you now whilſt the Goſpel calls to you; as, *Epheſ.* 5. 14. *Awaken thou that ſleepeſt*: If you will not, but will continue under the preaching of the Goſpel a company of drouzy Souls, (I am afraid that all that you have heard hitherto hath left many of you

faſt aſleep) but if you continue ſuch ſleepy Souls whilſt you have the light among you, if the Goſpel do not awaken you, how do you think it will be with you when night overtakes you? The Devil will ſay to you then, as Chriſt did once to his ſleepy Diſciples, *Mat.* 26. 45. *Sleep on now*: Nay Chriſt himſelf may do the ſame, ſince ye would not watch in the day whilſt ye had the light, now even ſleep on while ye will, ſleep on to the death. Friends, this ſleepineſs of Soul, if ye will not yet be awakened, is like to be your death ſleep. Chriſt ſaid to the Damoſel, *Mat.* 19. 24. *She is not dead but ſleepeth*; but 'tis to be feared it will then be ſaid concerning you, They are not aſleep but dead, dead in their ſins. O how many of the dead are there already amongſt theſe ſleepy Souls? Sinner, art thou yet aſleep in thy Sins? O thou art in a dead ſleep; and if this night overtake thee thus, its like to cloſe up thine eyes as the eyes of the dead are cloſed, never again to be opened.

And you that hope you have life in you, and yet will not be awakened by the day light, but will ſleep on ſtill, whom neither the lightning nor the thunder of the Word will awaken, pray tell me what dead ſleepers you alſo are like to continue in the dark and ſilent night?

This, I ſay, is like to be the miſery of people, if ſuch a night overtake us, they are like to be ſenſleſs Souls, that will not lay it to heart, nor be affected nor moved at all with the darkneſs that comes upon them, but will dye away in a ſleep; Become of the Goſpel, of the Ordinances of the Goſpel, of the Sabbath, and all the means of Grace what will, they will not be much moved or lay it to heart.

5. *Night is no time for work*, John 9. 4. *night cometh when no man can work*. Work there is, that lyes

lyes upon every one of you, and ſuch work wherein your life is concerned. I will not ſay only with the Apoſtle, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 10. *He that will not work ſhall not eat*, but he that will not work ſhall not live; thou ſhalt dye the death who doſt not in the day work out the work which God hath committed to thee to do. You have every one of you your work to do, and 'tis great work and of great conſequence: You are to work for your living, for an eternal livelihood; you are to work out your Salvation, that's your work in the general: And in this there are many particular works comprehended; there is the work of Repentance and Mortification of Sin, *&c.* There's Grace to be gotten and improved, there's your Peace with God to be made; have you done theſe works? have you repented? are your ſins mortified? have you grace in your hearts? have you made your peace with God? you that have, there's ſtill all this to be maintained and carried on, that ye loſe not the things which you have wrought. But are all theſe things yet to do with ſo many of you? are you yet without repentance? are you yet to ſeek for grace? have you gotten never a drop of the Holy Oil into your Veſſels? are you without the Knowledge of God, without faith in Chriſt, without repentance? is your peace with God yet to make? doth the wrath of God ſtill abide upon you? what, and yet aſleep? what, and yet ſuch idle, careleſs, loytering ſouls? What if this work ſhould never be done? if you ſhould never have more of Chriſt nor his Grace, never have more of Faith and Repentance than you have now? why then you muſt go down among the dead. Look ye down, caſt an eye down on thoſe chambers of darkneſs, that place of pitch and brimſtone, that place of fire and everlaſting burnings; look ye down into that horrible pit and ſee where you muſt lie, what

your place and your portion muſt be for ever, if you ariſe not and work theſe works of God; ye cannot live but muſt die, and that's the death you muſt die, you muſt burn, you muſt be tormented night and day for ever and ever.

Well now, you ſee here's great work to be done, and to be done by every one of you; you ſee what will follow if it be not done, you muſt die the death. O methinks now this word ſhould be a ſtirring word to you; awaken every one of you, ariſe and to your work, the night cometh when no man can work. And let it not ſuffice any of you to ſay, I hope this work is done, and therefore no ſuch danger if I be fallen aſleep; but know, 1. That if the grace you ſeem to have does make you grow ſecure, if you grow bold to be idle and careleſs upon the confidence that the work is done, that you are converted, have repented, and are made partakers of the grace of God, that confidence of yours is a deadly ſign that the work is not done, no nor ſavingly begun upon you.

2. Whatever work there be done upon you, your life lieth upon it, upon your careful and vigorous carrying it on; if you do not hold out to the end, keep working to the end, ye cannot be ſaved.

And is not this a ſtirring word to (you) alſo that are ſleeping and loytering profeſſors? *Awake or periſh, to your work or be damned?* And is not this ſtirring word ſeconded by a ſtirring providence, the appearance of ſuch a night approaching upon us; the light being even ready to vaniſh from amongſt us? If I ſhould not ſay concerning ſuch a night in the words of Chriſt, A night comes wherein no man (can) work, yet this I may be bold to ſay in ſuch a night, few men (will) work. What does our experience ſpeak to this? The ſhadows of the evening have been ſtretched out over us; it hath been evening and almoſt Sunſet

with

with us for divers years; and O what lamentable influence has this evening (wherein the word of the Goſpel has been more ſcarce) had upon us? what a woful change is there viſible upon the greateſt number of Profeſſors in *England*? are there not multitudes among us whoſe Religion is fallen and almoſt loſt? ſince it is grown darker, is it not alſo grown much colder with us? and what ſleepy loytering ſouls are we already become? Friends, if there be ſuch a fall of lively Religion amongſt us, while it is but evening, do you not tremble to think how much more tis like to be, when the thick darkneſs of the night hath overſhadowed us?

2. *Put upon ſtirring thoughts.* Our thoughts are apt to be buſie, and too buſie where they ſhould not; like little Children which will be buſie from morning till night about doing nothing. Keep your thoughts imployed, and *well imployed*; there are wandring thoughts which are too buſie, roving and flying up and down this way and that, which like the eyes of a Fool, *Prov.* 17. 24. *are in the ends of the Earth.* There are the wandrings of our thoughts *after ſin, and vanity, and impertinences*; we are thinking too much, and too often of what we ſhould not think; and ſometimes there are wandrings *after good things*; ſometimes our thoughts wander to Heaven, wander up and down about things Spiritual and Eternal; though we think ſometimes of theſe better things, 'tis but with wandring thoughts; though we light upon them, yet we fix not; we are not like the Bee which wanders from flower, but pitches and ſtays upon each flower till it hath gotten the Honey; but we are more like the Fly that leaps up and down, that's here and there and every where; ſometimes upon a Wall, ſometimes on a Flower, and ſometimes on a Dunghill, but ſtays nowhere. Our better thoughts

are

are ſo tranſient, and in and out, that they are to no purpoſe. Sometimes one Scripture comes to mind, but before any thing is made of it, away from that to another, and another, till all be forgotten and become unfruitful. Sometimes one Duty is thought upon, then off from that to another; ſometimes a little glance heavenward, by and by we fall and pitch upon the earth; one thought thruſts out another, till all that's good be loſt: Such hoverings up and down there are from this thing to that, as brings an utter confuſion in the heart. Theſe alſo may be reckoned among our vain thoughts, which we are cautioned againſt, *Jer.* 4. 14. *How long ſhall vain thoughts lodge within thee?* Not only our thoughts of vanity, but our thinking of good things in vain, and to no purpoſe, theſe alſo are vain thoughts. Exerciſe your thoughts upon good things, upon the matters of God and your Souls, and exerciſe them to purpoſe on them.

That your thoughts may be ſtirring thoughts, ſo as to ſtir up your hearts towards God and Godlineſs, they muſt be,

1. *Searching thoughts*; looking *upon*, and looking *into* the things of God. *Pſ.* 77. 6. *My ſpirit made diligent ſearch.* Searching looks deep into things. There are 3 great deeps that we ſhould be ſearching into; *the deep of the Heart*, and what we can find there either of good or evil; *the deep of the Pit*, the Infernal Pit, for what we may find there to awaken us; and the *deep myſteries of God* and his Goſpel, for what we can find there to keep us doing: If you would be thinking more what there is within you, what a world of wickedneſs there is in your hearts; if you would be thinking oftner what there is beneath, what a diſmal place your ſins are preparing for you; if you would be thinking more of the myſteries of God

God and Godlineſs, of the Counſels, and inſtructions, and ways of God, of the kindneſſes and compaſſions of God, of the ſeverities and wrath of God, and looking narrowly and deeply into them; ſuch thoughts as theſe would be awakening ſtirring thoughts; but then they muſt be,

2. *Working thoughts*; looking into theſe things, and ſtaying, and dwelling, and working upon them. Think upon your evil hearts, and never leave thinking and thinking, till you be affected with what you find in them; think till your hearts ake for the evil you ſee in them; think upon your ſin till your heatts tremble and turn from your ſins. 'Twas ſaid of *Peter*, Mat. 14. 72. *When he thought thereon he wept.* Pſalm 119. 59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy Teſtimonies.* Think on all your evils, till your hearts be thus affected with them, and thereupon be put to flight, to make an haſty eſcape from them: Think on God, and on Holineſs, and on Grace, till your hearts be athirſt for God and his Grace, ſo as to put your ſelves upon following hard after him. Think on theſe things with an applicatory eye to yourſelves: Yet again, bethink your ſelves, whether you have eſcaped, or how you may eſcape the evils that are within or before you; whether you have obtained, or how you may obtain the good things you deſire: Think how 'tis with you, how much you are under the power of ſin, how ſhort you are of the Grace of God, or if you have any, how very low 'tis with your Souls in this reſpect, how little you have gotten or how much you have loſt.

And when you find how bad 'tis, then think farther, Is it good for me? is it ſafe for me to continue at this paſs? is there any hope that I may recover out of this caſe? is it worth my pains to ſeek out after an eſcape? what ſhall I do? ſhall I venture on in this idle,

idle, trifling, carnal way as I have done? ſhall I venture an eternal loſs, an eternal miſery and wo, rather than put my ſelf to it to recover? ſhall I venture my ſoul on theſe Cobwebs, theſe rotten and deceitful Boughs that I have hang'd mine hopes upon? mine heart tells me, I may be ſaved however, though I have never more grace than I have now, though I never take more care than I do now, I hope for all that it may be well at laſt; ſhall I venture all upon ſuch an hope? ſhall I venture to ſin in hope, and ſleep in hope, and loyter in hope, that yet I ſhall obtain mercy? is it not moſt evident, that the hope that ſerves for nothing but to ſecure men in a carnal, ſinful, careleſs way, is a lying hope, a damning hope? 'Tis a lye, this carnal hope, 'tis a lye that I have in my right hand, I ſhall be undone by it for ever and ever; there's no hope, there's no hope, but I ſhall be loſt and periſh eternally, unleſs I ſhake off my ſins, and ſhake up mine heart to follow on after the Lord.

Friends, would not ſuch thoughts as theſe be ſtirring thoughts? could you ſleep in your ſins or under your backſlidings, were you more exerciſed in ſuch thoughts as theſe? O put upon ſuch thoughts, think of the ſad caſe your Souls are in, and think till you weep over your ſelves, think of the dreadful things you are in danger of, and think till you tremble, think of the things you have received and heard from the Lord, and think till they pierce and enter into your Souls. The many things that I have ſpoken to you in this matter, let them not be forgotten, but recover them back to your minds, and call them over in your thoughts, and ſet your hearts a working thus upon them. All the words I (can) ſpeak, all the counſels I (can) give you for your recovery, they will never do you good nor work a cure, if you ſet not your

your hearts on, work upon them; as you know your bodily food will never nouriſh you, nor your Phyſick cure you, unleſs nature work both with your Food and Phyſick.

Friends, I beſeech you in the Lord that you deny me not this requeſt, that you will every one of you beſtow ſome ſuch thoughts upon your ſouls; what, will you deny me in this? will you not grant me thus much? I do not now perſwade you to ſpend your money upon your ſouls, to be at the charge of all your ſubſtance for your ſouls recovery; this is that at preſent that I would deſire of you, that you would every day ſpend ſome ſerious thoughts about them; and what, will you not do thus much? not ſpare a few thoughts for your eternal welfare? Is not the ſcaping the fire worth your thinking of? I know you will ſay, O 'tis worth thinking, and working, and running, and labouring, all that ever I can, and ſpending all that ever I have, to ſave my life, to ſave my ſoul; every one of you will ſay ſo, and yet for all that, I doubt there are many of you that will not do this little thing, to ſpend ſome ſerious thoughts daily upon it.

Well, whether you will remember this or forget it, that my ſoul may not be guilty of your eternal miſcarriage, of your dying in your ſins, or of your ſleeping to death in your languiſhing ſtate, I once again warn you, to bethink your ſelves how 'tis with you, and every day to beſtow ſuch ſerious thoughts upon the important matters of God and your ſouls, as may tend to your recovery.

2. *Get you ſtirring affections.*

1. *Stir up godly ſorrow.* The Apoſtle wrote ſuch a Letter to the *Corinthians*, as made their hearts ake. 2 *Cor.* 7. 8. *I made you ſorry with a Letter*: and this ſorrow, what a ſtir it made in their hearts? v. 10. it ſtirred up *care*, and *fear*, and *indignation*, and *vehement*

ment deſire, and *revenge* upon themſelves for their faults and neglects.

O that my preaching to you might have the ſame effect upon you, that the Apoſtles Letter had upon them; that I might make you ſorry, ſorry at the heart, for the woful caſes that many of your ſouls are in: yea ſet you to it, to ſtir up this godly ſorrow in your ſelves; think, Friends, what matter of ſorrow and grief you have within you and amongſt you. The King ſaid to *Nehemiah*, chap. 2. 2. *Why is thy countenance ſad, ſince thou art not ſick?* I may ſay to you, why is your countenance not ſad, ſince you are ſo ſick? what, ſick at heart, and yet ſo merry at heart? Look inwards and ſee how 'tis with you; rake in your ſores and wounds, till you make them bleed and ſmart. Sure you have forgotten what hath been ſaid, if you yet find not for what to mourn. Remember your ſelves, is it no matter of ſorrow to you to ſee what your ſin hath made? What, is the head ſick, and the heart faint, and the whole man become wounds, and bruiſes, and putrefying ſores? and is all this nothing to you? what is your Religion, the Goſpel, and the name of your God wounded by you, by your hypocriſies, by your backſlidings, by your walking ſo unworthy that worthy name, and does not this move you? will you tell the World, that the Children of God are ſuch wanton unruly Children, or ſuch lean and ſtarveling Souls as you appear, who go under the name of his? have you grieved your God by your falls, by your follies, by your falſhood to his Covenant, and declining from his Ways? ſhall your Redeemer weep over you, becauſe of the hardneſs of your hearts, and the ſpirit of grace be grieved by whom you have been ſealed to the day of Redemption, and will not this grieve your hearts? O ſtudy out what matter of ſorrow you have, and give not off

that

that ſtudy till tears do come. What, is it with you as 'twas with *Iſrael*, *Jer.* 2. are you which were once holineſs to the Lord, and as the firſt fruits of his increaſe, now laid in common to the World, and the luſts thereof? have you changed your glory for that which profiteth not? *v.* 11. Have you forſaken the fountain of living waters, and hewed out to your ſelves ciſterns that will hold no water. *v.* 13. Is the Lord become as a wilderneſs to you, and as a Land of darkneſs, and is this world become your Paradiſe? have you loſt the kindneſs of your youth and the love of your eſpouſals, and is your love to Chriſt ſwallowed up of your luſt after vanity? See, Friends, if this be the caſe of any of you; and if it be, O make not light of it, but lay it deeply to heart; and as *v.* 19. let your own wickedneſs correct you, and your backſlidings reprove you, and know and ſee, that it is an evil and a bitter thing that you have thus forſaken the Lord, and that his fear is ſo much departed from you.

Friends, O that my word may put you to grief, and make you ſorry. What, art thou not ſorry for all this? canſt thou not yet ſay, O I am pained, I am pained at the heart for mine iniquities? my backſlidings reprove me, my fooliſhneſs corrects me, and makes my ſoul within me to mourn? art thou at eaſe in ſuch a caſe? is thine heart quiet as if all were well and nothing ailed thee? O how little hope is there then of thee that thou wilt be recovered? If I could but make you ſorry, if you would but ſtir up a godly ſorrow in your own ſouls, O how mightily would this work to your recovery! then what fear would there be of continuing thus any longer, then what indignation againſt your ſelves for your own follies, in departing thus from the living God! then what

what care would there be, and what vehement deſire after a ſpeedy eſcape and recovery!

2. *Stir up fear.* But what cauſe have we of fear? ſearch, and you may find cauſe enough. Is there no matters of fear in your preſent caſes? *You that are in your ſins*, you ignorant, impenitent, ungodly ones, is there no fear of you? are your ſouls ſafe? are they not in danger? is there no fear of unbelievers? is there no fear of hypocrites? no fear of the drunkards, the covetous, the proud, of lyars, of looſe livers? art thou ſuch a one, and is there no fear what may become of thee? art thou under condemnation, and yet not under fear? As the penitent Thief ſaid to the other, *Luke* 23. 40. *Feareſt thou not God?* Feareſt thou not God, ſinner, who art under condemnation? and if thou feareſt not God, feareſt thou not the Devil neither, feareſt not thou Hell neither? O ſtupid, ſenſleſs ſouls, what under condemnation and yet not afraid?

2. *You that hope you have grace*, and yet continue low in grace, is there no fear concerning you? no fear of idlers and loyterers? you that have but little and ſatisfie your ſelves with that little, is there no fear that that ſomething may be nothing? *He that thinketh himſelf to be ſomething but is nothing, deceiveth his own Soul*, Gal. 6. 3. Is there no fear that though you think your ſelves to be ſomething, to have ſomething of Chriſtianity in you, ſomething of ſaving grace, yet you may at laſt be found to have nothing, and ſo be deceived? is there no fear of deceiving your ſelves in a matter of ſuch importance? are you in ſuch danger of being deceived, and yet not afraid? or if you have ſomething of Chriſt or Religion in you, is there no fear that you may loſe that little you have, and come to nothing at laſt? What means that exhortation, *Rev.* 3. 11. *Hold faſt what thou haſt?*

What

what means that caution, 2 *John* 8. *That we loſe not the things that we have wrought*, what mean theſe words, if there be no danger of loſing what we have?

3. *You that are already fallen to decay*, that have loſt your firſt love, is there no fear of your looſing all? Is there no fear, but you ſhall recover all again? or is there no fear of you, whether ever you do recover or no? is there no fear of backſliders, no fear of revolters, and apoſtates? where-ever there's danger, there ſhould be fear; what, unbelievers and in no danger? what, hypocrites and in no danger? what backſliders, what Apoſtates and yet in no danger? what, can you ſay, there's no danger to men in my caſe? can you ſay, I thank God, whoever be in danger, my Soul is out of danger? There's not one of you dares ſay ſo, you have loſt the underſtandings of men if you confeſs not, The Lord be merciful to me, my Soul is in great danger. What, are you in danger, and yet not in fear? what, in ſuch great danger, and yet not afraid? not afraid of the Devil, not afraid of Death, not afraid of Hell when in ſuch great danger of it? When Chriſt ſays, *Luke* 12. 4. *Fear not them that kill the body*, wilt thou ſay, no, nor will I fear him that can deſtroy body and Soul? O poor ſtupid Souls, awaken your fears; open your eyes and ſee your danger; the Lord open your eyes before it be too late, and make you to ſee the fearful caſe you are in, and ſo make you afraid. If I could rouze up your fears, it would be as the ſtirring up a neſt of Hornets about your ears, which ſure would make you run for it. *Prov.* 28. 14. *Happy is the man that feareth*; if there were more fear in you, there were more hope of you. Friends, I ſhould have done God and your Souls good ſervice this day, if I could but preach you into fear, if I could but make you a-

fraid of your ſelves, if this word might run through all the 3 ſorts of you I am dealing with, *the Impenitent, the Loyterers, and the Backſliders*, wo is me wretched creature, I am afraid, I am afraid what will become of me; I am afraid I ſhall to Hell, I am afraid the Devil will have me at laſt; if ſuch a word might come through all your hearts, the next word I ſhould hope to hear, would be this; Well, I ſee there is no ſafe abiding thus, I am undone if I continue as I am, ariſe O my ſoul, flee away out of this ſinful ſtate and get thee into Chriſt; ſhake thee out of this ſloth, recover out of this languiſhing ſtate, recover thy firſt love, return to thy firſt works, or I ſhall loſe my Crown and my Soul. O Friends, ſtir up ſuch a fear in your ſelves, do not hide your danger from your own eyes till it be too late; dare not to ſay ſuch a word, I truſt my Soul is in no danger; but deal plainly with your ſelves, and come to underſtand the truth and the worſt of your caſe; give not over to ſtudy your danger till yon have ſtirred up your fear, and when your fear is once up, this, there is hope will ſtir up all within you to make out after an eſcape.

3. *Stir up deſire.* Deſire is the thirſt of the Soul, and thirſt is a ſtirring appetite as I have already ſhew'd, and therefore ſhall need to ſpeak the leſs here. Deſire will ſtir up to labour, therefore 'tis that *Solomon* ſays, Prov. 21. 25. *The deſire of the ſlothful killeth him.* 'Tis death to the ſlothful to labour, and yet his deſire will prick him on upon it: *One thing have I deſired that I will ſeek after*, Pſ. 27. 4. [One thing have I deſired] that notes a ſtirring deſire; when the motions of the ſoul run in one chanel, & all after one thing, then they run more ſtrongly and impetuouſly; and this ſtrong deſire puts him upon an *earneſt ſeeking* the ſatisfaction of it. *Prov.* 13. 12.

12. *When the deſire cometh it is a tree of life*: And what is ſo ſweet when it comes, will be the more earneſtly purſued before it comes.

Would you be zealous followers of God and followers of Holineſs? get ſtronger deſires after the Lord and his Holineſs. Strong deſires will pour forth ſtrong cries; your Souls will go on crying after the Lord, crying after his Grace, and the power of his Spirit, if ye do in earneſt deſire it. Cold deſires, or none at all leave the ſoul as a Ship becalmed that ſtirs not on; when the Wind is quick, and the Sails are filled, its motion is more ſwift; but when the Wind lies, it moves not at all. Our ſlight and ſlow endeavours in following of God, if you inquire into the reaſon of them, 'tis becauſe deſire fails.

Stir up your deſires, get you quick and ſtrong deſires and theſe will not ſuffer you to be ſo ſluggiſh: But how muſt we ſtir up our deſires after God?

1. *Suppreſs and keep under your carnal deſires*: Deſire Earth leſs than you do, and you will deſire Heaven more than you do. A River that is divided into ſeveral Chanels, runs more weakly in either; when our ſtreams are united and run all in one Chanel, they are much the ſtronger. *Unite mine heart to fear thy name*, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* 86. 11. Let me fear God, and let me fear none but God: So let your Souls ſay, Unite mine heart to love thy name and to deſire after thee; let me love nothing but God, let me deſire nothing but God; let me be able to ſay as the Pſalmiſt, *Pſal.* 73. 25. *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there's none on earth that I deſire beſides thee*: Thou haſt all my love, and all my deſire is towards thy name. When you love nothing but God, when you deſire nothing but God, O this will be ſtrong love, theſe will be ſtrong deſires: What you inordinately love or deſire beſides the Lord, this

will abate your love and your desires after him. Friends, your desires after this World, your appetite after Meat, and Drink, and Money, and carnal Pleasures, are too eager to have any strong desires after the Lord. Quench your carnal thirst if you would have your Souls to pant after God and spiritual things: Be more indifferent what you have or how 'tis with you in respect of these carnal things; whether you have more or less, whether it be better or worse with you in respect of these; leave it to God, to do with you what he will, to let forth these nether streams, or to dam them up; to make you rich or poor, prosperous or afflicted; and the more patient you are of wanting the nether streams, the more impatient will be your thirst after the upper streams. Whereas 'tis hard to find any persons in the World, that have a greedy appetite to things below, who have any great or strong desire upwards. *If any man love this world*, 1 Jo. 2. 15. that is, with an ardent and intense love, *the love of the Father is not in him*: And so if any man desire this world with his most eager and greedy desire, the desire after God is not in him. Methinks this word should shake the hearts of some professors; there are, I doubt, many that go under the name of Christians, that are as excessively hungry after this world, whose Souls are hunting after, and heaping up whatever they can catch of this earthly muck, with as great zeal and ardency of mind, as any of those do, or can, who have nothing of Christianity in them, nor profess, nor pretend to any such thing. He is a covetous worldling indeed, who doth love the world, and wish for the world, and work harder for it, than some of these do which profess religion. It is a shame and a reproach to the Gospel that it should be so, and wo be to them by whom the reproach cometh: But yet 'tis too true, there

are amongſt the number of Profeſſors, ſome (though not ſo many as the world ſay, God forbid there ſhould, for they ſay all are ſuch) yet ſome ſuch there are, whoſe hunger and labour after the world can hardly be overmatch'd by any of thoſe, whoſe names are written in the earth, and have no part nor portion in Chriſt, nor name in his Churches.

Friends, I pray deal faithfully in this matter, every one of you with your ſelves; ask your hearts, How ſtand I affected to this world! are my deſires after this earth moderated and limited by my Religion, or are they not ſo high and impetuous, that they have even ſwallowed up my deſires after God? are you as impatient when you ſink and grow to decay in religion, as you think you ſhould be, if you were ſunk and fallen to decay in your outward eſtates? Can you truly ſay, I am not ſo much athirſt to grow rich in this world, but I am more athirſt to grow rich towards God? nay, can you ſay this, I am ſo much athirſt for God, that this hath quenched my thirſt, and allayed my deſires after this world? I am become more indifferent what I have here, whether more or leſs, my heart ſits looſe from all below, through the ſtrength of my deſires after God? can you ſay ſo? O that you could, more of you than I doubt can.

Well know, that 'tis impoſſible that you ſhould intenſely deſire God and this World together; one of the two muſt fall; you muſt ſtrike ſail as to your earthly affections, or your ſouls will never hoiſe up ſail heavenwards. And this is the firſt direction for the kindling and quickning your deſires heavenward, ſuppreſs and allay your carnal and earthly deſires.

2. *Be ſenſible of your neceſſity*: Neceſſity kindles deſire. *Pſ.* 63. 1. *My ſoul thirſteth for thee, my fleſh longeth for thee.* Whence is this thirſt and longing?

O 'tis from his neceſſity. I am in *a dry Land, where no water is.* I have need of thee, Lord, need of (thy) water Brooks, for out of thee I have none; 'tis all a dry Land, there's no water below thee, to quench my thirſt.

Friends, would you be quenched in your deſires after more Grace? be ſenſible of your barrenneſs and your want; do you not want to be in better caſe than you are? have you grace enough to ſupply your neceſſities? thoſe that are very poor outwardly, whoſe poverty pinches them, their neceſſity will make them beg. How is it there are ſo many poor, ſo many neceſſitous ſouls, and yet ſo few begging ſouls? even ready to ſtarve for want of bread, and yet cry no more after it? Why, 'tis becauſe, however we are in great neceſſity, yet we have not a due ſenſe of our neceſſity; our ſoul poverty doth not pinch us; men that are extreamly poor in the world, their poverty pinches them; but for ſouls, the poorer they are, the leſs they are pinched with it. O friends, if you were more pinched with your ſpiritual poverty, if thoſe dry and lean ſouls, did but feel how lean you are, if you were touched with a feeling of your neceſſities, if your cold wiſhes, *I would I had more grace*, were come to, *I muſt have more*; I muſt be more holy, I muſt be more heavenly-minded, I muſt be more zealous for God, and more buſie and active in following him, a neceſſity lies upon me, and wo is me if I continue as now I am; the ſenſe of your neceſſity of getting up into a better caſe, would enlarge your deſires after it.

3. *Be practically convinced of the excellency of a proſperous ſtate in the grace of God.* All the world, how eagerly are they wiſhing after proſperity? men have ſuch high thoughts of worldly proſperity, that every one would be glad to proſper; as *Mal.* 3. 15.

they

they count *the proud happy*, ſo generally, do worldly men, count the rich happy, the proſperous happy: When we hear of men grown up to that plentiful eſtate, deſcribed *Pſ.* 144. 13, 14. *Whoſe garners are full, affording all manner of ſtore, whoſe ſheep bring forth thouſands, and ten thouſands in their ſtreets, whoſe Oxen are ſtrong to labour, and there's no complaining in the ſtreets*, who have plenty of good things, and nothing ailing them; how do worldlings cry out, Happy are the people that are in ſuch a caſe; and hence 'tis, that their very Souls are all upon the wing, making all the haſte they can after this earthly proſperity.

And what if Chriſtians had as great thoughts of ſoul proſperity; *O what a caſe are they in, whoſe (hearts) are full of all manner of ſtore*, full of wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding, full of faith and of power, full of the hidden treaſures of eternity; whoſe mouth is full, that have grace in their hearts and grace in their lips; whoſe life is full of all the fruits of righteouſneſs! what an excellent ſpirit are they of, what an excellent life do they live! happy are the people, thrice happy are the ſouls that are in ſuch a caſe. Do worldlings call the proud happy, the rich happy, the great ones happy ones? Yea rather, *Happy are the Souls whoſe God is the Lord*; and thoſe eſpecially, who have the grace of God ſo abounding towards them and in them. What if you were practically convinced of this, of the excellency, of the happineſs of a flouriſhing proſperous ſtate in the grace of God? If you did not only notionally conclude it ſo in the general, for that every Chriſtian will do, but with a particular reſpect to your ſelves, O how happy were it for (me) if I were one of theſe proſpering ſouls, if I could get (my) ſoul to be filled with God, and the Spirit of the Lord Jeſus; O if I could love as the beſt of Saints love, O if I could live

as I ſee ſome Chriſtians live; if from creeping on the earth, and having my foundation on the duſt, my ſoul might get upon the wing, and have its converſation in Heaven; if in ſtead of having fellowſhip with ſinners, I might have fellowſhip, and live in communion with the Father and the Son; if inſtead of ſerving my fleſh, I might ſpend my days in ſerving the living God; if from being ſuch a ſluggard, ſuch a cold and lazy ſoul, I might get up to be fervent in ſpirit ſerving the Lord; O what if there ſhould be ſuch a change made upon me! if from this dead, and dry, and barren caſe I am in, I might be brought to be a living, lively, fruitful, heavenly, zealous Chriſtian; O what a bleſſed change would this be! O how ſhould mine heart be filled with joy, and my mouth with praiſe! Brethren, ſuch ſenſible apprehenſions of the excellency and bleſſedneſs of that proſperity in religion, which I have been preſſing you to, what would it work, what would it bring forth, leſs than ſuch ſtrong deſires, *O let my ſoul be in ſuch a caſe*; What would I deſire more? how would I deſpiſe, and trample on the beauty, and glory of the world, and leave ſuch dotages upon the beſt to be found here, to the men of this world, who know no better things? O how heartily could I then ſay with the Apoſtle, Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9. *What things were gain to me I now count them loſs for Chriſt, yea doubtleſs and I count all things but loſs for the excellency of the knowledge of Chriſt Jeſus my Lord*, for whom *I am content to ſuffer the loſs of all things*, and do count them *but dung that I may win Chriſt, and be found in him, and may know him, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable to his death.* Such ardent deſires would a ſenſe of the excellency of Chriſt, and a proſperous Chriſtian life bring forth; O that I might apprehend, O that I might

might attain to ſuch a bleſſed ſtate; and ſuch ardent deſires would bring forth a zealous proſecution and following after, if by any means poſſible, we might attain and get up unto it.

O friends, that you would ſet to it, thus to ſtir up your deſires: You ſay, *I deſire*, *I deſire*; I deſire to pleaſe God, and to follow God more fully, and more freely than I do, but it is ſo dully, and ſo coldly that you deſire it, that it comes to nothing; and for ought I know, ſuch cold deſires may burn with you in Hell at laſt.

O get an abatement of your carnal deſires: never look to deſire heartily after an heavenly life, till you have crucified and conquered your earthly deſires. Conſider more thorowly your neceſſities, conſider the miſerable poverty of your ſouls, and barrenneſs of your lives; the great power that this World hath ſtill upon you, and your neceſſity of getting it conquered; and do not barely ſay, I could wiſh it were better with me, wiſhing will never do it, but bring your hearts to it, to ſay in good earneſt, *I muſt*, *I muſt* get mine heart into a better frame, I muſt get me to a better life, a neceſſity lies on me to look to it, and labour for it: and then look upon the bleſſedneſs and comfort of ſuch a proſperous flouriſhing ſtate of ſoul, and look till your hearts be enamoured of it; and this is it that will engage you mightily in the effectual following after it.

4. *Stir up hope.* May be you'll ſay, I do deſire it were better with me; I ſee it would be happy for me, if I could obtain, but the Lord help me, I have little hope of it: I have deſired ſo long, and waited ſo long, and yet it comes not; but my poor and barren ſoul after all ſtill abides in the ſame dead and lifeleſs ſtate as ever, and is ſo far ſhort, and at ſo great a diſtance from that bleſſed ſtate, that I am even quite diſ-

diſcouraged, and am in doubt I ſhall never obtain. Be not diſcouraged, *hope in God.* To ſtir up this hope conſider;

1. *The promiſe of God.*
2. *The earneſt that you have already received.*

1. *Conſider the promiſe of God.* The hope of the Saints is called *Acts* 26.6. *the hope of the promiſe of God.* The promiſe, which is the foundation of our hope, is our encouragement againſt all deſpondencies. Amongſt the many promiſes that we have for our encouragement I ſhall mention one, *Matth.*7.7. *&c. Ask and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth, &c. What man of you, if his ſon ask bread, will he give him a ſtone? &c. If ye being evil, know how to give good things to your Children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask it of him!* Here I ſhall ſhew,

1. *The matter of the promiſe,* or what God will give, that is, *good things.* In *Luke* 11. 13. 'tis expreſſed, *give the holy ſpirit*; there's all that you need in one word. In giving the holy Spirit, is included the giving all good things. What is it you want, to help up your weak and languiſhing ſouls? Is it a ſpirit of Wiſdom and Underſtanding that you want? is it a ſpirit of Holineſs? is it a ſpirit of Grace and Supplication? is it a ſpirit of Faith and of Power? is it the teachings, the motions, the quicknings, the conduct, of the Spirit? How is it with them that are taught by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, worſhip God in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit? So ſhall it be with you, if ye obtain the holy Spirit upon your asking of him. This grace, the grace of the Spirit ſhall be ſufficient for you, to make the dry tree to ſprout, and the barren to bring forth fruit.

2. *The*

2. *The means of obtaining this promiſe.* Ask, ſeek, knock; this notes prayer, importunity in prayer, and the uſe of all means, that muſt go along with prayer. Ask, ſeek, knock; pray and pray inſtantly, and follow on after the Lord, and ye ſhall have, ye ſhall obtain; this gracious, this all-ſufficient pirit ſhall be yours.

3. *The aſſurance of prevailing.* This is, 1. From the Promiſe, ye ſhall have, ye ſhall find, it ſhall be opened; Heaven ſhall be opened, the heart and the hand of the all-ſufficient God, the bowels of Chriſt, the Covenant, all the Treaſures of the Goſpel ſhall be opened to you. Thou that art in fear, that the heart of the Lord is ſtreightned towards thee, that the bowels of his compaſſion are ſhut up againſt thee, that the treaſures of the Goſpel are all lock'd up from thee; ask, and knock, and all ſhall be opened. If all the help that is in Heaven, if all the riches of Chriſt, if all the treaſures of the Goſpel, will recover and raiſe up that weak and withering ſoul of thine, take the right courſe and thou ſhalt have it; all theſe treaſures ſhall be opened; thou haſt my word for it, the word of promiſe, which God that cannot lye, hath given thee to put thee out of doubt.

2. From experience. Every one that asketh receiveth, *&c.* There's no man in the world, that hath taken this courſe, that ever failed; find out any one man if thou canſt, that can ſay, God hath been worſe to me than his word; and ſurely thou mayeſt boldly ſay, He that never failed any one of his Servants, I have good hope he will not fail me.

3. From the relation of God to his Saints: He is their Father; whence he reaſons thus: If the Fathers of their fleſh will not deny the Children of their own bowels, (which of you if his Son ask bread, *&c.*) if the Fathers of our fleſh will not deny the Children of their bowels, any good thing they need and ask,

how

how much leſs, will your Father in Heaven, who is a God of bowels, of infinite compaſſion, deny his Holy Spirit to thoſe that ask it of him?

Chriſtians, ſtudy this Promiſe, truſt upon this Promiſe: and whatever your fears and diſcouragements are, that you ſhall never obtain, uſe Gods means, ask, and ſeek, and knock, follow on inſtantly, and earneſtly in Gods Way, and then hope in God, and be no longer diſmayed.

2. *Conſider the earneſt that you have already received*, what pledges God hath given you, for the performance of his Promiſe. What, is nothing of this Promiſe performed to thee? O I hope there is; ſomething I have gotten from it, but it is ſo very little, that this diſcourages me. Why, *this little* thou haſt received, is a great encouragement to hope for more. I ſay, though you have asked, and fought, and knock'd, and yet but little comes, yet that very little which you have obtain'd, is great ground for you to hope for all that you need. Every little that you receive from the Promiſe of God, is an earneſt to aſſure you of all that is behind. Have you received but the firſt fruits of the Spirit, a little Grace, a little Strength, a little improvement in Grace? Is it a little better with you than it hath been? this is a pledge to you from the Lord, that if ye follow on ye ſhall have more and more. There is hope, in what the Lord (hath) given you, in what he hath done for your ſouls; 2 *Cor.* 1. 10. *He that hath delivered, and doth deliver, we truſt that he will deliver.* He that hath ſupply'd and doth help you, hence you may hope, that he will ſupply all your needs, out of the riches of his grace, by Chriſt Jeſus. If the clouds from above have yet but dropped upon you, and that grace which your parched Souls, like the thirſty earth hath received, hath come in but drop by drop, you may

from

from thoſe drops, have the more hope of a ſhower, that ſhall rain down righteouſneſs upon you, until your ſouls become as a well-water'd Garden, and as a ſpring of waters whoſe waters fail not.

Chriſtian, is thy Soul as the chapp'd ground, opening and gaſping after the influences of the Lord, and hath it begun to drop? is there ſomething come down? art thou a little quickned, a little revived? thoſe very drops are the forerunners of a ſhower, that will fill all thy furrows. O look about you Friends, ſee, after all the means that God hath been uſing, to quicken and improve your Souls, ſee if any drops be fallen upon you; if it be a little better, if there be ſomething done to your recovery; be not diſcouraged that 'tis no more, be humbled that 'tis no more, but be not diſcouraged; he that hath begun, there's ſo much the more hope, that he will perfect a cure upon you.

Thus ſtir up your hope in God, by conſidering the Promiſe, and any little degree of its performance. But beware, (I cannot too often give you this caution) uſe not this hope to make you ſecure, and careleſs; ſay not, for your lives, as bad as 'tis with me, I hope it will be better, and thereupon ſleep on, and neglect to follow after: There is no hope for ſuch a Soul, let not your hope ſecure you in your negligence, but eſtabliſh you againſt your diſcouragement; let it not ſecure you againſt diligence but encourage you unto diligence. Since the matter ſtands thus, as great a diſtance as there is betwixt your preſent ſtate, and that proſperous ſtate of Soul, which you deſire and wiſh for, and as great difficulty as you imagine it, ever for you to get up to ſuch a ſtate, ſince both the Promiſe and Experience gives you ſuch ground of hope, that even you alſo, with whom 'tis ſo very low, may get comfortably up, therefore be en-

encouraged to take all the pains poſſible hereto. Look on *Acts* 26. 7. and there ſee how hope will work; *Unto which promiſe, our twelve tribes, inſtantly ſerving God night and day, hope to come.* Obſerve it, God gave them a promiſe, the promiſe gave them hope, and their hope encourages and provokes them on, inſtantly to ſerve the Lord; and this inſtant ſerving God is their way to the poſſeſſion of the Promiſe.

Friends, let all this that hath been ſpoken, engage you to all manner of diligence, and fortifie you againſt all manner of diſcouragements: come on Chriſtians, come on in the name of the Lord; you have heard many directions that I have given you, and ſome more there are that yet remain; O ſet your hearts to the practice of all theſe words, and how hard ſoever it may ſeem to be, take the way preſcribed to you, and then commit your way to the Lord; hope in him, and he will bring it to paſs, and give you your hearts deſire; only when you have done all, and no ſucceſs appears, yet ſtill wait for the Lord. As there muſt be the *expectation of hope*, ſo there muſt be the *patience of Hope*: Wait on the Lord and keep his way; be not weary of well-doing, and in the end ye ſhall reap if ye faint not.

O Friends, follow on after the Lord, and encourage your ſelves on, by your hope in God: Pray for more grace, pray for more life, and more power, and pray as men of hope. Strive and ſtir up your ſleepy hearts, and ſtrive as men of hope, that as low as 'tis with you, yet there's hope for you to get up. Be encouraged by the promiſe, be encouraged by every little that you have received. Hath the Lord but begun to awaken you, let that be his ſecurity to you, that he will do more, and better things for you: Are you yet a great way ſhort? are there many difficulties

ties yet before you to break through? are there any fears and miſgivings of heart, that ye ſhall not obtain? yet do not diſcourage your ſelves, hope in God, hope in the promiſe of God, and in the help the promiſe offers: be not diſmayed, put you on after the Lord, and hope in God. Say to your hearts in the words of the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* 43. *ult. Why art thou caſt down, O my ſoul? why art thou diſcouraged, O my ſoul?* Hope in God, and thou ſhalt yet praiſe him, who will be the health of thy countenance and thy God. Though my fleſh and mine heart fail me, yet he is the ſtrength of mine heart, and in him ſhall be my hope and my truſt: there is a promiſe before me, and unto this promiſe, if I can but inſtantly ſeek and ſerve the Lord, I have hope to come.

4. *Get a ſtirring Conſcience.* God hath made conſcience overſeer and ruler in the heart; he hath advanced conſcience in the heart to the ſame dominion, that *Potiphar* advanced *Joſeph* in his houſe, *Gen.* 39 4. he made him overſeer of his houſe, and put all that he had into his hand. Or as *Pharaoh*, *Gen.* 41. 40. advanced him in his Kingdom; to whom he ſaid, *Thou ſhalt be over mine houſe, and according to thy Word ſhall all my people be ruled, onely in the throne will I be greater then thou.* Conſcience is ſubject to none but God; God is greater then Conſcience, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. *God is greater then our hearts*, that is, then our Conſciences. But next under God, Conſcience hath the ſupreme dominion in the Soul; and as the Centurion to his Souldiers, ſo Conſcience, where it maintains Authority, ſays to all the faculties of the Soul, to one go and it goeth, to another come and it cometh, and to every one, do this and it muſt be done.

Now as Conſcience is faithful and diligent, or as it is careleſs and negligent, ſo do matters go in the Soul; a faithful watchful conſcience ſets the whole

ſoul

ſoul in good order, a negligent ſleepy conſcience lets all run to ruine: when God hath given men up to a ſpirit of ſlumber, when conſcience ſlumbers, the whole ſoul falls aſleep; or, which is worſe, runs out into all manner of diſorders. When God will awaken ſleepy ſouls, he begins with conſcience; awakens conſcience firſt, and that will awaken all their powers. God awakens conſcience, moſtly by frights, as the Gaoler by an earthquake, and *Saul* by an affrighting voice from Heaven, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* Soul, Soul, what art thou doing? why ſlighteſt thou the Lord? why fighteſt thou againſt God? There's nothing but ſuch thunder from Heaven that will rouſe a ſleepy conſcience. But though there's none but God that can awaken conſcience, yet God ordinarily does it by our ſelves; ſets the ſoul on work upon its ſelf, to its own awakening; a word, or it may be but a thought, comes into the heart, which is made to ſtick into conſcience, and to ſting it out of ſleep: and when conſcience is ſtung, and begins to ſtir, there's no more ſleep, no more quiet in the ſoul. When the Maſter of the houſe is up, and about once, he rouzes all the Servants: O Friends, get your conſciences to be awakened, get your conſciences to be ſtirring, and then all your faculties will up and be doing. That conſcience may be a ſtirring conſcience,

1. *Let Conſcience open its ears and hear.*
2. *Let it open its eyes and ſee.*
3. *Let the mouth of Conſcience be open and ſpeak.*
4. *Let it be quick and tender.*

1. *Let Conſcience open its ears and hear what the Lord ſpeaks.* Let the voice of the Lord have an impreſſion upon conſcience; when the Word comes into the thoughts onely, it's quickly gone, and does nothing; or when it hath ſome ſudden work upon the affections, that wears off; but when it enters into the con-

conſcience, when conſcience hears the Word of the Lord, when the Word which we preach from God, is as the Apoſtles word, 2 *Cor.*5.11. *made manifeſt in the conſcience*, then it is in a way to proſper. Let conſcience open its ears firſt; and 2. *Let conſcience open its eyes and ſee*, ſee how it is with the Soul, how ſad and miſerable the ſtate and way of the Soul is; ſee how it's like to be, to grow worſe and worſe; ſee how it ſhould be, and what is to be done that it may be better. 3. *Let Conſcience have its mouth open.* Sleepy conſciences are ſilent conſciences; thoſe that ſee nothing will ſay nothing. Let your conſciences ſpeak to you: whatever the Word preaches to conſcience, let conſcience preach it to the whole heart. O Friends, if we could ſo preach to you, as to ſet your conſciences a preaching to you the ſame things; if when we preach to you, repent, and recover your ſelves out of the ſnares of the Devil, we could get your conſciences to preach repentance to you: if there were ſuch a voice heard within you, I ſee I muſt repent, I am loſt and undone if I repent not; if when we give a rebuke to you out of the Word, your conſciences alſo would rebuke you; if the Word calls you, *thou unbeliever, thou child of the Devil, thou hypocrite, thou loyterer, thou backſlider*; let but conſcience ſay the ſame, 'tis true what the Word ſpeaks, I am an unbeliever, I am an hypocrite, a child of the Devil, an idler, a backſliding ſoul; I cannot deny it, 'tis too true what the Word ſpeaks concerning me: If the Word threatens, thou ſhalt have thy portion with unbelievers and hypocrites, thy place among the children of the Devil, if thou ſpeedily repent not, let conſcience ſay the ſame, this muſt be my place, and my portion, if I amend not; there's no help for me, there's no hope for me, if I continue and go on as I am: If the Word exhorts you, Be converted thou unbelieving ſoul, put

away thine hypocriſie, ariſe ſluggard, return O back-ſliding ſoul, remember whence thou art fallen, and recover thy firſt love, and do thy firſt works; let conſcience ſpeak the ſame words, go to Chriſt O my ſoul, turn from thy ſins, make thy peace with God, get thee a new heart, be upright with God, be found in the Faith, follow the Lord thorowly, follow the Lord fully; as ever thou looke ſt for mercy do it, as ever thou hopeſt for pardon do it; wouldſt thou ever ſee the ſalvation of God, thou muſt count upon it, to ſeek after the grace of God, and increaſe and abound therein unto the end, and then ſomething would be like to be done.

4. *Let Conſcience be quick and tender.*

1. *Let the ears of Conſcience be open, and let it be quick of hearing.*

2. *Let its eyes be open, and let it be quick ſighted.*

3. *Let its mouth be open, and let it ſpeak quick & home.*

1. *Let its ears be open, and let it be quick of hearing.* Be not of thoſe fat and groſs ſouls, which are dull of hearing. How many deaf ears do we preach to, that hear nothing, whoſe hearts will hear no more then the ſtone of the wall, or the beam of the timber? and of thoſe that will hear ſomething, how many that are dull of hearing? we have much work, and hard work, to beat any thing into them. O get an hearing ear, and be quick of hearing; *Swift to hear*, as *Jam.* 1. 19.

2. *Let the eyes of Conſcience be open, and let it be quick ſighted*; ſo that it may eſpy and obſerve the ſmalleſt matter of duty and ſin: and let it be tender eyed, and not able to bear the leaſt of evils; ſome mens eyes can ſee none but the groſſeſt of evils; can ſee drunkenneſs to be evil, or ſwearing, or groſs lying to be evils; but for ordinary intemperances and exceſſes, ſo they do not eat and drink themſelves into very beaſts and ſots; though they ſit with the Drunkards, and waſte

their

time with them, and their eſtates with them, and be fooliſh, and jolly, and carnally merry with them; ſo they be not downright drunk, they'll tell you, they ſee no evil in it. Other men, though they can (ſee) ſmaller evils, yet their conſciences can ſwallow them; though conſcience be never ſo quick ſighted, yet it wants tenderneſs, and they can diſpenſe with themſelves in ſmaller matters: you will never be Chriſtians of any proof, you will never come to much in religion, unleſs your hearts be tender of the ſmalleſt evils.

3. *Let the mouth of conſcience ſpeak quick and home.* I will not ſay concerning Conſcience, as the Apoſtle concerning the Tongue, *Be ſwift to hear, ſlow to ſpeak*; but let it be ſwift to hear, and ſwift to ſpeak. Let it ſpeak quick, and ſpeak home. Let it ſpeak home, and ſpeak aloud; let not your conſciences be muzled or meal mouthed; let them ſpeak, and ſpeak cloſely, and deal plainly with you; let them not whiſper out a warning, or a reproof, but if they may not otherwiſe be heard, let them do as the Prophet was to do, *Iſa.* 58. 1. *Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet.* Let conſcience never leave ſpeaking and crying, till it be heard; ſuch a conſcience as this, is like to be a ſtirring conſcience.

That's a ſtirring conſcience, which will maintain its authority and integrity, whatever difficulties or pains it coſt; which will be faithful in inſtructing, admoniſhing, and rebuking, and will not, that its word or authority be ſlighted: which will not ſuffer its ſelf to be ſlighted, and abuſed, nor to be baffled, or put off with ſhifts, and excuſes or delays: ſuch a conſcience (will) be obeyed, you ſhall have little eaſe, it will not ſuffer you to have any reſt or quiet in your minds, if you will not hearken to it. As the Apoſtle ſaid he will not, 2 *Cor.* 13. 2. ſo neither will conſci-

ence; it *will not ſpare them that have ſinned.* If conſcience gives an admonition, or a warning, *take heed of pride, take heed and beware of covetouſneſs, or frowardneſs,* or ſuppoſe, but loytering and coldneſs in matters of Religion: if conſcience gives warning, *take heed of this worldly carnal lazy trifling life,* and a warning will not do, it will check, and chide, and rebuke, and ſcourge the heart; if its voice may not be heard, 'twill ſet in its teeth, 'twill bite, and ſting, and worry the ſoul; if once ſpeaking, or chiding, or ſcourging will not do, 'twill hold on, and lie at the ſoul, from day to day, and give no reſt till it prevail.

O what ſtirring Chriſtians ſhould we be, had we ſuch ſtirring conſciences! the reaſon why we ſin, and ſink as we do; ſhuffle in our Religion, turn aſide after the world, play the hypocrites or the formaliſts in our duties, let all run to ruine within us, and ſuffer our ſelves to continue aſleep, this is much our conſciences faults: conſcience lets us alone, and either does not ſpeak but keep ſilence, or if it ſpeak, 'tis too ſoftly, it does not chide or ſcourge us, it does not come to us with a rod to ſmite us for our faults. You that can go on in your ſins, or go ſo coldly on in your Religion, you with whom the World is ſo much riſen, and godlineſs is ſo much fallen, (you can't but confeſs that this is the caſe of many of you) how is it with your conſciences mean while? what ſays conſcience to you in this caſe? it may be juſt nothing, conſcience is aſleep as well as you. O if we could but awaken your conſciences out of ſleep, if the ſtirring words the Lord ſends among you, might have but this effect, to ſtir up conſcience, this would awaken you all to another manner of life, and activity in Religion.

Friends, what's become of all thoſe words, thoſe awakening words, that have been ſpoken on this ſubject? have they ſtirred up any thoughts of heart within

in you, and ſet theſe on work? have they ſtirred up your affections, and ſet theſe aworking in you? if they have not, 'tis a ſign they have not ſtirred up conſcience; and what hearers have you been, if conſcience hath been aſleep all this time? when ſhall we ever ſtir your hearts, or mend your ways, if we cannot ſtir your conſciences?

If your conſciences will yet hear, then let them ſpeak, and give their judgment on theſe particulars:

1. *If it be not a wretched thing, to be moſt remiſs and negligent in thoſe things, which are your higheſt concernment*; to be ſo buſie and intent about thoſe ſmall matters, about Meat, and Drink, and Money, which all periſh with the uſing, and to be ſo remiſs, and heedleſs, and heartleſs, about the moſt weighty and important affairs? What ſays conſcience to this? Do not you think in your conſciences, that this is a wretched thing, and a piece of extream folly?

2. *If the matters of this world, be not all but ſmall matters, in compariſon of the matters of Religion*, the matters of God and the other World; what ſays conſcience to this? Do not you think in your conſciences 'tis ſo, that the moſt proſperous ſtate in this world, is a Toy in compariſon of proſpering in your Souls, and the matters of Salvation? If that Queſtion be put to you, *Mat.* 16. 26. *What ſhall it profit you if you win the whole world and looſe your own ſouls*, would not your conſciences ſay, It would profit me nothing! O 'tis a miſerable gain, that's gotten by ſuch an eternal loſs; every mans conſcience, I doubt not, but muſt ſpeak thus, if it will ſpeak at all.

3. *If yet this be not many of your caſes*; Is it not the plain truth, that you are more remiſs, and heedleſs, and cold in the matters of Religion, than in the matters of this World? do not ſome of your conſciences

tell you, O 'twere well for me, if I were but as hearty, and lively in Religion, as in my worldly concernments; if I could ſerve the Lord, as hotly and as heartily as I ſerve my fleſh; but I cannot ſay 'tis ſo well with me; my conſcience tells me, and I cannot deny it, I am much more intent about Earth than about Heaven.

4. *If it be not better for you to rouze up, and recover your ſelves, out of your remiſneſs and coldneſs in the matters of God, and to abate your zeal for the World*; would it not be well for you if this word might have this effect, to make ſuch a change? do not you think in your conſciences 'twould?

5. *If it be not neceſſary for you, thus to rouze your ſelves up, and recover*; doth not conſcience tell you, you are in hazard of being undone for ever, if you continue at this paſs?

6. If Conſcience judges thus in all theſe particulars, and will but ſpeak one word more, then it would be well; if conſcience would hereupon, give the word of command, awaken ſleepers, ariſe ſluggards, put away your ſloth from you, hearken to the word of the Lord, take his warning, ſtir up your ſelves, bethink your ſelves, recover your ſelves from this dulneſs and deadneſs of heart; ſeek the Lord earneſtly, ſerve the Lord inſtantly; no more ſuch idling, and creeping on, be zealous; run the good race, fight the good fight, make ſure the good treaſure, lay hold on eternal life; live not at theſe hazards and uncertainties, but do thy beſt, put forth thy ſtrength in the work of the Lord, that thou mayeſt come to a certainty; if your conſciences would ſpeak thus to you, and cry thus in your ears night and day, and not ſuffer you to reſt, till you hear and anſwer its cries; or if you yet linger and delay, if conſcience would make uſe of the rod, and ſmite and

ſcourge you out of your remiſneſs; if your conſciences would fall upon you, and ſting you for your neglects, and fright you out of your ſecurity, by telling you and laying before you, the dreadful reward of ſleepers, and ſuch idle ſervants; would caſt in ſome of that fire into your hearts, which your ſin and your ſloth is preparing for you; if your hearts would condemn you for your follies, and tell you down right, this my way I am in, is the way of death, theſe my paths lead down to hell; I am ſleeping upon a rock, drowzing on a maſt: O the waves are ready to riſe, and tumble upon me, and to ſweep away this ſleeping ſoul of mine, and drown it in everlaſting perdition: Had you but ſuch a ſtirring conſcience as this, O what a cure, what a change would it ſpeedily make upon you?

Brethren, awaken conſcience, that conſcience may awaken you; look to your conſciences, that conſcience may look better to you: *Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?* Is it day break? doth ſleep begin to depart from thine eyes? what is the Watchman aſleep? awake ſleeper, 'tis high time to awaken out of ſleep. Speak thus to your conſciences, and then hear what conſcience will ſpeak to you.

Friend, art thou fallen? art thou come to this? ſo thou canſt but grow rich in the world, thou conſidereſt not how poor 'tis with thee in thy ſoul? whilſt thou haſt been ſo buſie for thy ſelf, and thy fleſh, haſt thou let fall the care of thine heart? whilſt thou haſt turned aſide after thy pleaſures, after thy lovers, haſt thou loſt the ſight of God? have thy carnal correſpondencies, and compliances made thee ſuch a great ſtranger in Heaven? What ſays conſcience to this? Ask, Is it peace conſcience? is it well? Is it with me, as it hath been? is it with me as it ſhould be?

Speak, conſcience; go tell this man, I have ſomewhat againſt thee, thou haſt left thy firſt love, remember whence thou art fallen, return to thy firſt husband, for then it was better with thee than now. What haſt thou gotten ſince thy departing from thy God? may be thou haſt gotten more of the world about thee, more great friends than heretofore, more eſteem and reputation amongſt thy friends; but O wert thou not a better man, when thou wert a poorer man? hadſt thou not more of a Chriſtian, in the days of old, when thou hadſt leſs of this world? Remember the ſweet days that thou hadſt, when thou walkedſt humbly with thy God; remember the hopes, and the joys, and the peace that thou hadſt, in the ſecret receſſes to thy beloved: Now thou canſt ſnatch at a duty, caſt a look heavenward, a word and away, ſcarce conſidering what thou doſt, or what entertainment thou haſt with the Lord; thou haſt thy long dinners but ſhort duties; long markets but ſhort prayers, and as ſlight as they are ſhort: What ſays thy conſcience to this? does it not tell thee, thou haſt made a dear bargain? 'Tis a great rate that thy riches have coſt thee, that thine eaſe and thy pleaſures have coſt thee; better thou hadſt kept thee a poor man ſtill, and been holy, and humble, and tender, and upright, than to have made a purchaſe of the world at ſo dear a rate, as the loſs of thine integrity and tenderneſs.

Speak conſcience, and ſpeak home in this matter; thou mayeſt ſpeak where I may not, thy word may be heard, where mine may not.

Conſcience, art thou awakened? get thee about and walk the rounds, and ſpeak according to what thou findeſt. Go into the City, and obſerve the Profeſſors there; go into their Chambers, and ſee if thou find them not in their beds, when they ſhould be

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on their knees; go into their Wardrobes, ſearch after their gawdy clothing, their antick ornaments and attires, and ſee if thou find not ſuch habits and dreſſes as are fitter for a Stage player than for a Chriſtian; go into the Parlour, and hear what's going amongſt them there, whether there be any more ſerioufneſs or ſavourineſs in their diſcourſes together, than there is amongſt them that know not God; and whether the Cards and the Dice be not, where the Bible was wont to be. Go to their Tables, and obſerve their ſuperfluities, and curioſities, how delicately, how ſumptuouſly they fare every day, like that Gentleman, *Luke* 16. Go into their Shops, and their Markets, and obſerve if there be no lying, and deceitful dealing, even as amongſt others; obſerve how little difference thou canſt find, betwixt ſome that are Profeſſors, in their dealings, and thoſe that pretend to no Religion.

Then conſcience, from the City go down into the Country, into the Fields, into the Houſes, and ſee how buſie they are there; in ploughing, and ſowing, in building, and planting, in buying, and ſelling, laying houſe to houſe, and field to field, haſting to be rich, oppreſſing the poor, working, and ſweating, riding, and running, and neglecting nothing, but God and their Souls. See what they do, and ſee how it fares with them, both in City and Country; what ſtarveling ſouls thou findeſt within, under their pampered fleſh; ſee conſcience how 'tis, and ſpeak according to what thou ſeeſt; reprove them, warn them, worry them; if they will not hear thy voice, ſet in thy teeth and make them feel.

O Chriſtians, if I could but ſet on your conſciences thus upon your backs, or if you would ſet them on upon your ſelves, you would both hear of more that's amiſs in you, than now you will acknowledge, and

and would find no quiet till you ſet upon amending.

5. *Be much converſant with ſtirring ſociety and acquaintance, and be ſtirring among them.* And here I ſhall endeavour the reviving of that too obſolete practiſe, of *holy and quickning diſcourſe*, the neglect whereof is both a cauſe, a ſign, and an effect, of the decay of Religion among us: For the recovering and promoting of this Holy Practiſe, I ſhall give you

1. *Directions for the bringing you on upon it, and the better managing of it.*

2. *An Argument to perſwade you to it.*

For the Directions, they are theſe that follow.

1. *Get your hearts well filled with the Grace of God.* Mat. 12. 34. *Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth ſpeaketh.* 1. Men ordinarily fetch their words but of their hearts; as 'tis ſaid of a fiery Tongue, *Jam.* 3. 6. *It's ſet on fire of Hell,* that is, of that Hell of malice, that is in the heart; ſo of an holy Tongue it may be ſaid, all the good that comes from it, is kindled from Heaven, from that of Heaven, that is in the heart. Men uſually (unleſs it be the Hypocrite) ſpeak according to what is in their hearts; the proud heart ſpeaketh proud things, the vain heart ſpeaketh vain things, and the holy heart ſpeaketh holy things. 2. 'Tis the (abundance) of the heart, that's moſt apt to come forth at the lips. In ſome hearts there is a little good, but much evil; in others, there is much good and leſs evil; 'tis that which abounds in the heart, that which is moſt in the heart, that hath the command of the tongue.

See that there be Grace in your hearts, and that the grace of God abound in you; a little grace will not do, to ſet your tongues agoing, 'tis the abundance of the heard, that which moſt abounds within, that will have the eaſieſt and moſt ordinary vent: *Job* 32. 18.

32. 18. *I am full of matter, my ſpirit within me conſtraineth me; my belly is as wine, which hath no vent, it is ready to burſt, like new bottles; I will ſpeak that I may be refreſhed, I will open my lips and anſwer.* I am full of matter, and therefore will I ſpeak; an heart full of grace, muſt and will have a vent by the ſpeech: The holy ſpirit within us will conſtrain us; where there is little good coming forth, 'tis a ſign there is not ſo much as there ſhould be within: We may pretend inability, and unaptneſs to ſpeak, as the reaſon of our barrenneſs of holy diſcourſe, that ſometimes may be ſomething that hinders, but moſtly the reaſon is, there wants matter within: We have reaſon to ſuſpect, that 'tis from want of grace, rather than from want of utterance, that no more ſavoury, and ſpiritual, and uſeful words come from us.

A full heart will be the beſt help for a ſtammering tongue. Chriſtians, let us get an increaſe of inward grace, let us get more of the holy ſpirit, of a ſpirit of life and love, and power within us, and our Friends and Acquaintance are like to hear of it oftner, and to better purpoſe, than they do. Poor creatures that we are, we are empty, we are empty, our inſides have no good filling: *Be ye filled with the ſpirit*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *Epheſ.* 5. 18. *ſpeaking to your ſelves in Pſalms, and Hymns, and ſpiritual Songs*; and the more we ſpeak thus to our ſelves, the more freely ſhall we ſpeak to others: thoſe that have but little grace, are but Babes in Chriſt, and Babes are but Infants, that can't ſpeak; when the Infant is grown, then he will find his Tongue: In vain ſhall I exhort you to uſe your Tongues more for God, till you be nurſed up from Children to more ſtrength in grace: Would you ever come to be more fruitful and uſeful in your Generations? this muſt be your way to it, get you more inward grace.

2. *Let*

2. *Let your* [*thoughts*] *be working more about holy things*: Thinking makes way for ſpeaking; what our thoughts run moſt upon, that ordinarily our Tongues will run upon. We cannot know each others thoughts, but we may give a near gueſs at them, by the words that are ſpoken: Men whoſe thoughts are moſt in the Earth, that are ſtill thinking of their Money, or thinking of their Trades, or their Pleaſures; they can hardly forbear to be talking of theſe things: And if our thoughts were more of God, and of our Souls, of Religion, of Righteouſneſs and Holineſs, we ſhould certainly have more of God and of Heaven in our Mouths. The Pſalmiſt, who ſaid, *Pſ.* 119. 46. *I will ſpeak of thy Teſtimonies, and will not be aſhamed*, ſaid alſo, *Pſ.* 119. 97. *My meditation is of thee all the day long.*

Chriſtians, get your thoughts to be well exerciſed, be much in thinking, think of the goodneſs, and kindneſs, and holineſs, and compaſſions of the Lord; think of Chriſt, of his love, of his life, of his death, of his bowels, and everlaſting kindneſs; think often what great things the Lord hath done for your ſouls; think what ye would that he ſhould do for you: much thinking on God and his holy things, will leave an holy tincture on your hearts, will by degrees do much to the begetting holy habits and diſpoſitions in you: The Lord uſes to convey down much of his holy Image and likeneſs upon the heart by the thoughts. Friends, ſuch of you who find but little of the impreſs and image of God upon your hearts, pray conſider it, if you be not too great ſtrangers to the thoughts of God: How often in a day are your thoughts in Heaven? how very ſeldom is it, that you are ſeriouſly looking, either upwards or inwards? No wonder if your tongues be ſo ſilent of God, whilſt your thoughts are ſuch ſtrangers from God.

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Chriſtians, I doubt there are many of us, that are much faulty here; that our thoughts are no more taken up or working upon things ſpiritual and heavenly; we ſhould make the thoughts of God more precious and delightſom, and more *familiar* and ordinary with us: we ſhould be able to ſay of our thoughts of God, as the Pſalmiſt does, *Pſ.* 139. 17, 18. *How precious are thy thoughts to me, O God; how great is the ſumme of them? If I ſhould count them, they are more in number then the ſand. When I awake I am ſtill with thee.* Thus it was with that holy man, and thus it ſhould be with us; we ſhould be much with the Lord in our thoughts; but is it ſo with us? Friends, do but trace the goings of your ſouls, for one day together, and ask your hearts in the evening, how much have I been with God this day? how often have I been looking Heavenwards? the Pſalmiſts holy thoughts were ſo (many) that he could not count them, and it may be ſome of ours have been ſo (few) that we cannot count them; we can hardly remember any ſuch thoughts we have had.

I know 'tis hard work to keep your thoughts well imployed, they will be wandering and roving more or leſs, do what you can; and you that obſerve your ſelves, cannot but know it your ſelves, how hard a work it is; and I am afraid that ſome of us, becauſe 'tis ſo hard a work, will let it alone: if their thoughts will gad, and rove, let them gad whither they will; if they will not eaſily be gotten up to Heaven, let them even ſtay below, and ſo we let them take their own courſe, and run whither they will. I pray, Friends, this once; put your ſelves every one of you to it, and ſpend this one thought upon your ſelves; think *which hath moſt of your thoughts, God or this World*; muſt you not, if you ſpeak truth, ſpeak the quite contrary to what the Pſalmiſt ſpeaks? whileſt he ſaid, *How pre-*

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cious are thy thoughts to me, O God; how great is the ſumme of them? Muſt not you ſay, how irkſom are thy thoughts to (me) O Lord, how ſmall is the ſumme of them? this argues an evil temper: 'tis ſure a carnal frame your hearts are in, where ſpiritual thoughts are ſo rare and difficult: and I ſhall not wonder, that 'tis ſo hard to ſpeak, where 'tis ſo hard to think of any thing that's good: nor ſhall I hope to proſper in my exhortation, to uſe your tongues better, till you be perſwaded to exerciſe your ſelves to better thoughts.

Friends, if you would open your ears to the counſels I have given you from the Lord, and put your ſelves upon ſuch holy thoughts, your ears would open your mouths. I know not what to ſay, to make my words to ſtick upon you, and to be reduced into practice: here I come and preach to you, and you come to hear, and then away, and quickly forget all, and ſcarce beſtow (ſome of you) a ſerious thought upon it afterward. O will you be perſwaded to try what you can do, to put upon a more thoughtful life; and if you would be once brought to it, to be more ſeriouſly thinking Chriſtians, you would more eaſily come to it, to be more ſavourly ſpeaking Chriſtians. *While I was muſing*, or thinking, ſaith the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* 39. *the fire kindled, and then ſpake I with my tongue.*

3. *Get a zeal for the honour of Chriſt, and for doing him the beſt ſervice you can.* Conſider often, wherefore hath the Lord made me, this living ſoul? *Pſ.* 100. 3. *It is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves.* But wherefore hath he made us? *v.* 4, 5. that we ſhould *enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praiſe*; that we ſhould be *thankful unto him, and ſpeak good of his Name.* This we are made for; and wherefore am I redeemed? why was that precious bloud ſhed for me? for what was it that Chriſt died? 2 *Cor.* 5. 15. *That they which live ſhould not henceforth*

live

live nnto themſelves, but unto him that died for them. Wherefore am I called, and ſanctified, and ſeparated from the ungodly World, by the Spirit of Chriſt? why was I not left out among the men of this world? wherefore is it, that I was not left among the Drunkards and Profane of the earth, among the Heathens and Infidels, amongſt the blind and ignorant Multitude? wherefore is it, that I and my brethren in Chriſt, are called in, and are become a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, and not left out in common with the World? wherefore is all this? Why, 1 *Pet.* 2. 9. that we might *ſhew forth the vertues of him that hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.* And then conſider farther, what ſhall I do to anſwer theſe great ends? to ſerve the Lord, to live unto Chriſt, to ſhew forth his vertues and praiſes? how happy would it be for me, if I could ſerve to theſe holy ends. Is it not my duty thus to live? is not the Lord worthy whom I ſhould ſerve? is not Chriſt worthy to whom I ſhould live? what can I do better with my ſelf, then to conſecrate my life to him? O this is a life for a Chriſtian, O this is a life for the redeemed of the Lord, ſo to carry it in their whole converſation, that Chriſt may be magnified in them. O let my love, and my labour, and my care, let the ſtrength of mine heart, let the ardent zeal of my ſoul be all ſpent upon this very thing, that Chriſt may be honoured and magnified in me.

Friends, what if we were brought to this paſs, and wrought up to this holy zeal for Chriſt? what would it bring forth? would it ſuffer us to dwell in ſilence? the zeal of our hearts would open our lips, that our mouth would ſhew forth his praiſe; the tongue of the dumb would be looſed, the dumb would ſpeak, and ſpeak good of his Name; our delight would be to be

ſpeak-

ſpeaking of our Beloved. Our excuſes and pleas for our ſinful ſilence are, *O I am ſlow of ſpeech, of a ſtammering tongue*; I can't ſpeak to any purpoſe, and therefore as good hold my peace: this may be ſomething, in ſome perſons; but there's a worſe cauſe lies at the bottom; thou doſt not ſo much want a tongue to ſpeak, as thou wanteſt an heart to ſpeak. Hadſt thou more love to Chriſt, more zeal for Chriſt within thee, this would open thy mouth: if thou canſt but find thee an heart, thine heart would find thee a tongue: if thine heart were as big, and as hot as that holy Prophet was, *Jer.* 20. 9. thou wouldeſt ſay as he did, *I am weary of forbearing*. I cannot hold, but I muſt ſpeak; thou wouldſt then be as weary of forbearing, as now thou art weary of ſpeaking. Chriſtians, get you ſuch a zealous heart, let your hearts be once firmly ſet in you, to do Chriſt all the honour you can; be more heartily concern'd for the honour of his name, for the glory of his Kingdom, for having your hand in the propagating of his Goſpel: Be more throughly poſſeſſed and even ſwallowed up of his love, be more firmly and more paſſionately devoted to his ſervice, and I need ſay no more to you in this matter, this would do it, this zeal of your hearts would put grace into your lips.

4. *Get more pity and compaſſion to ſouls.* *Jude* 22. the Apoſtle exhorting Chriſtians, to be active for the good of ſouls, requires, *On ſome have compaſſion, putting a difference; others ſave with fear, pulling them out of the fire.* The meaning is, put a difference in your dealings, betwixt the weak and the willful; on the weak have compaſſion, deal more pittifully and more gently, and more tenderly with them, but more roughly with thoſe that are willful; ſave them with fear, fright them out of the fire. Compaſſion muſt be either *as a means* for the reſtoring of ſinners;

and

and thus ſome muſt be dealt compaſſionately and tenderly with, others more roughly: In this ſenſe there muſt be compaſſion exerciſed towards the weak but not towards the wilfull; that is, we muſt deal gently with the one, but not ſo, but muſt deal roughly with the others: Or elſe our compaſſion muſt be *our motive* to put us upon dealing with ſouls: And thus, on all we muſt have compaſſion, without making a difference; or if any difference be, the worſt of ſinners muſt be the object of our greateſt compaſſion. We muſt have compaſſion on the moſt obſtinate, and wilfull ſinners, upon the wickedeſt of men; thoſe that will have no compaſſion on you, if they have you in their power; thoſe that have no compaſſion on themſelves, and their own ſouls; thoſe that are the moſt hardned in their ſins, towards theſe eſpecially ſhould be our great compaſſion; thoſe who are in the greateſt miſery, in the greateſt danger, are the greateſt objects of compaſſion.

There ſhould be compaſſion in the heart of a Chriſtian towards every ſinner; though moſt to the greateſt ſinner, yet ſome compaſſion to every ſinner, even to the ſinning Saints that are amongſt us; and this our compaſſion ſhould be an argument fetch'd out of our own bowels, to preſs us to do the beſt we can for them. What was it that mov'd Chriſt, to engage ſo deep as he did, in ſaving of Souls? 'Twas his compaſſion that mov'd him to it. *Iſ.* 63. 9. *In his love and his pitty he ſaved them*: And ſuch a one, a compaſſionate one, it was requiſite that our Highprieſt and Redeemer ſhould be; one that can have compaſſion, on the miſerable; and that which was Chriſts motive to do his part, muſt be our motive to do our parts, our compaſſion to ſouls; nor muſt we have compaſſion to ſinners only, but one to another, 1 *Pet.* 3. 8. *Having compaſſion one of another.*

O Friends, have compaſſion on one anothers ſouls,

this will open your mouths. Doſt thou ſee a company of poor ſinners, held in the ſnares of the Devil, running headlong to the pit, deſtroying and damning themſelves with all their might? doſt thou ſee a company of blind ſinners, of ſick ſinners, deadly ſick, and ready to die of the plague of their hearts? doſt thou ſee the Devil butchering and murthering ſo many, and dragging them on, one after another, as the Ox to the Slaughter? Where be thy bowels? haſt thou no pity within thee towards ſuch miſerable ones? How canſt thou ſay, I pity them, when thou wilt not ſpeak a word to recover them out of their miſery? how canſt thou ſay, There's a poor drunkard, I pity him that he is ſo carried away, when thou wilt not ſpeak one word to reform him? how canſt thou ſay, There's a poor, blind, and ignorant ſoul, I pity his ignorance, when thou wilt not ſpeak a word to inſtruct him? how canſt thou ſay, There's a poor worldling, I pity him, to ſee how hee is eaten out of his worldly cares, when thou wilt not ſpeak a word to convince him of his danger? and how canſt thou ſay, concerning ſinning Chriſtians, it pities mine heart to ſee, how ſome of them do pine away, and conſume; what backſliders they are, how cold and careleſs and dead-hearted they are: How canſt thou ſay, I pity theſe backſliders, I pity theſe waſted and decayed ſouls, when thou wilt not ſpeak a word, to remember them from whence they are fallen, and to help towards their recovery? If thou wouldſt be faithful, who knows but thou mayeſt ſave poor, loſt, and languiſhing ſouls? doſt thou pity them notwithſtanding? wilt thou ſay, thou haſt no pity for them? thou art an hard-hearted one, thou haſt ſhut up thy bowels againſt them, who ſhutteſt up thy mouth, from yielding that help thou mighteſt for their recovery. Be pitiful, Chriſtians; pity poor drunkards, pity poor, blind, and hardned ſinners, pity poor,

lukewarm, and backſliding Profeſſors; and in your pity, go ſpeak to them; parents, pity your poor ignorant rebellious Children; Husbands pity your poor carnal Wives, Maſters pity your poor Families; every one of you, pity your poor carnal friends and acquaintance; and in your pity labour their Converſion and Salvation.

O the miſerys of poor ſinners ſouls cry in your ears, *you that have the heart of a Chriſtian, pity me.* Whilſt Sinners *mouths* are full of ſcorns at you, whilſt they will laugh and mock at you, for any good they ſee or hear; yet *the miſerys* their ſouls are in, cry for your pity, though ſome of them will reply to you, if you offer them a word to them about the danger of their ſtates, *what is that to you?* look to your ſelves, meddle with your own buſineſs; yet ſtill the more pity is to be ſhewd to them. If you would hear the voice of their miſery (& bowels have ears to hear that voice) if you could hear the voice of their miſery this would be it, *O an undone, a loſt, a periſhing ſoul*; a captive to the Devil, yea and not willing to be delivered, running on upon mine own ruine, almoſt paſt recovery. Is it nothing to you that ſtand by? behold and ſee if there be any miſery like my miſery? O be neither deaf nor dumb to me: open your ears and hear the cry of my miſery, and then open your mouths and tell me what I muſt do to be ſaved; but open your bowels firſt, and that will moſt effectually open your ears amd mouths.

5. *Go always well provided.* Get you well furniſhed with matter for holy diſcourſe, the great hindrance is the want of an heart, but in ſome, though they have a heart to ſpeak, yet they are to ſeek for matter, they know not where to begin, *Mat.* 15. 52. *Every Scribe which is inſtructed to the Kingdom of Heaven, is like an houſholder which brings forth out of his treaſure, things new and old.* Here 3 or 4

things: 1. Good men have a treaſure within them; they are well furniſhed, and have in readineſs for all holy uſes: Vain men, 'tis no wonder they are vain in their diſcourſes, they have it not in them to be otherwiſe than they are; they are empty ſouls, and therefore have but barren lips. 2. Their treaſure is laid in by inſtruction, by what they have received by inſtruction, by what they have learned and heard. 3. A good mans treaſure is long a gathering; he hath within him, *things new and old.* 4. A good man doth retain his inſtruction; old things are not paſſed away with him; the things that he heard many years ago, they are ſtill with him; he hath hid the word in his heart, as the Pſalmiſt did, *Pſ.* 119. 11. and where he hides it there he finds it. Of *Mary* it's ſaid, *Luk.* 2. 51. that ſhe kept all the ſayings of Chriſt in her heart. 5. Out of this treaſure in the heart it is, that he brings forth, for the uſe and benefit of others: His treaſure, though it be hid in his heart, yet 'tis not buried there, but there it lies, ready to be brought forth. *Pſ.* 45. 1. *My heart is inditing a good matter, I ſpeak of the things that I have made, concerning the King, my tongue is the pen of a ready writer.* Where obſerve: 1. He prepares what he had to ſpeak: He did not ſpeak *quicquid in buccam*, whatever came firſt to mind, but he meditates and thinks before he ſpeaks. I ſpeak *what I have made*, made ready for my tongue. 2. He is ready to ſpeak what he had prepared; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

For want of this proviſion and preparation, ſome men are dumb and ſilent, they have nothing to ſpeak; other men, if they ſpeak, ſpeak nothing to purpoſe; to prevent both theſe, both ſinful ſilence and impertinent ſpeaking, this is the beſt courſe I can adviſe you to, go always prepar'd and well provided of what to ſpeak: provide your ſelves,

1. *From the Scriptures.* When you read a Chap-

ter, any ſpecial things you read, that may be of moſt and moſt frequent uſe, lay them up in your memories; think with your ſelves, here's a word, that I may ſhortly have occaſion to make uſe of, in my Family, or amongſt others, and ſo remember it that you may have it in readineſs againſt you have occaſion.

2. *From the Sermons you hear.* I have told you formerly, and now tell you again, that it would be a ſpecial means for the improvement of Ordinances, and a ſpecial help to holy diſcourſe, if what you hear preached on the Lords Day, you would make the matter of your diſcourſe the week following; hereby you may the more fix what you hear, in your own hearts, and hence you may be ſupplied with freſh matter, and ſo find holy diſcourſe the leſs difficult to you. How you have obſerved this direction, ſince I formerly gave it you, whether you have put it in practice, I leave it to your conſciences to judge. Friends, if you will not take the directions given you, and put them into practice, to what purpoſe are they preached to you? I therefore exhort you again to practiſe this uſeful direction, what you hear on the Lords Days, diſcourſe of on the week days.

3. *From your own experiences, of the dealings of God with your own ſouls, Pſ.*66.16. *Come and hear all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my ſoul.* Self-obſerving Chriſtians have many experiences by them, which may be much uſeful for others. You may be telling one another, what experiences you have had, of the workings of ſin in you, and of temptations; and what experiences of the workings of grace, and of your victories over corruption and temptation, what comforts you have had, and how you come by them; what diſtreſſes and fears you have been under, and how you were relieved; what difficulties you have found in your work, how long you groaned under them, and how at length you overcame

them. Many caſes you may have been in, out of which much may be brought forth, for the benefit of others, that are or may be in the ſame caſes.

4. *From the conſideration of the company, that at ſuch or ſuch a time you may be like to be caſt amongſt.* Some days, it may be, you may ſee your neceſſary buſineſs leading you amongſt ſinners: you muſt work with them, in the ſame field, or the ſame ſhop; or you muſt travel with them the ſame journey, and the like: theſe ſinners, whom you foreſee in the morning, you muſt converſe with on the day, may be, they may be blind, or ignorant ſinners, or profane and lewd ſinners, or mocking and ſcoffing ſinners; whatever temper they are of, the conſideration of it, will give you an hint, what to provide: for the ignorant, you muſt go provided with words of inſtruction; for the profane, with a word of reproof; for all ſorts, ſuch words as you judge moſt proper for their caſe, and moſt like to do their ſouls good.

Sometimes you may ſee, your converſe is like to be among Chriſtians; and then conſider, whether they be weak Chriſtians, and need your help, and what their weakneſſes are, and go provided of a word accordingly: a word of comfort to the troubled, a quickning word to the dead hearted, and ſlothful, a recovering awakening word to the backſliders, &c. or elſe they may be ſtronger and more judicious Chriſtians; & then your ſtudy ſhould be, to go prepared with ſuch queſtions, touching your own caſes, touching any doubts, or fears, or ſpiritual wants, or difficulties you are under, that you might receive benefit from them.

Theſe directions are all practicable, and may be exceedingly uſeful; it will coſt you pains to inure your ſelves to this holy practice, but by pains taking awhile, and the help of God with you, it may come to be more eaſie: and were it but ſeriouſly ſet on foot, and carefully carried on, you cannot eaſily imagine,

what an advance to you it will be in the ſtate of your own ſoul, and what a bleſſed expedient 'twill be, to propagate religion where it is not, and to recover it where 'tis fallen, and to raiſe it where it is but low.

Well, this is the ſum of all the Directions hitherto given, *Go always with your bow bent, and your arrow upon the ſtring*; with an heart will diſpoſed to ſpeak, and a word ready to be ſpoken.

6. *Take a right method, by which you may with the moſt eaſe attain to this holy uſe of your tongues.* You will ſay, 'tis hard ſervice, and ſo it is; but are you willing to try to come to it? Why what method will you preſcribe to us that we may attain?

1. *Begin this practice within your ſelves*; ſpeak often to your own hearts, *Pſ.* 4. 4. *Commune with your own hearts*, maintain an holy diſcourſe with your ſelves. The Cock doth firſt clap his wings on his own breaſt to awaken himſelf, and then he crows to awaken others: As the Apoſtle, *Rom.* 2. 21. *Thou that teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf?* Thou that wouldſt inſtruct another, warn and awaken another, how canſt thou do that, if thou doſt not firſt inſtruct and awaken thy ſelf? *Mat.* 7. 5. *Thou Hypocrite, firſt caſt out the beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly, to pull out the mote out of thy brothers eye.* That's the complaint, *Iſ.* 64. 7. *There is none that ſtirreth up (himſelf) to take hold on thee.* Stir up your ſelves in the firſt place, ſay to your own hearts, Ariſe ſleeper, there's a God before thee, there's a Chriſt before thee, there's a Goſpel and a Covenant of Grace before thee; lay hold on this God, lay hold on this Covenant, walk worthy of the Lord, and be faithful in the Covenant of thy God. Speak thus to your own Souls, and diſcourſe the matter, reaſon with them about it, as the Pſalmiſt reaſons with his Soul, in his diſtreſs, *Why art thou caſt down, O my Soul? hope in God*; ſo do thou reaſon with thy Soul, in thy deadneſs, or

in thy hardneſs, or any other caſe thou art in? Why art thou lifted up, O my Soul! why ſo hardned? Fear God; why ſo proud? why ſo carnal? why ſo ſlothful? humble thy ſelf, ſhake up thy ſelf, quicken and rouze up thine own ſleepy heart.

Brethren, here's the original, of all our neglects of our duties to others, our ſelf-neglects, till we ſtir up our ſelves more carefully, we ſhall never do any thing to purpoſe at ſtirring up one another. Kindle an holy fire in your own breaſts, ſet your own affections more ſtrongly working upwards; if we can get up our own hearts, into a more ſerious lively frame, then there's hope we ſhall more effectually help up others.

2. *Next ſet upon this holy practice in your Families.* Inure your ſelves to be ſpeaking of God among your own, with them you can be more free and bold. There's no ſuch great difficulty for a Father to ſpeak to his Children, for a Maſter to ſpeak to his Houſhold; and by ſpeaking much to theſe, you will by degrees, grow more free and more able to ſpeak to others. Fall therefore cloſer upon this practice; Fathers ſpeak often to your Children, Husbands ſpeak often to your Wives, Wives ſpeak to your Husbands, Maſters ſpeak to your Servants, Servants ſpeak you one to another. *Deut.* 11. 18, 19. *Theſe my words ſhall be in thine heart, and in thy ſoul*—— Speak them to thy ſelf firſt, and then ——*ye ſhall teach them to your Children, ſpeaking of them when thou ſitteſt in thine houſe, and when thou walkeſt by the way, when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up.* Charity begins at home, and ſo muſt all Religion; Religion muſt begin at home, in thine own heart firſt, and then in thine houſe, and thence thou wilt get more ability, and aptneſs to diffuſe it abroad.

Conſider, Beloved, how is it with you at your homes, upon this account? what Religion is there going in your Families? how often do your Children, and your Servants hear any gracious words from you?

O Friends, do all you can, to make all yours, Partakers of the Grace you have received. Is the word of the Lord in thine own heart? let your whole houſhold hear oftner of it, as you ſit at your Tables, as you ſit at your fires, or are walking in your houſes; 'tis not now any ſtated way of inſtruction, by reading the word, repeating Sermons, catechizing, &c. that I am dealing with you about, but that in a way of familiar diſcourſe, you would be often dropping down ſome gracious words: Friends, have you a conſcience towards God? What conſcience is that, that will ſuffer you to live in the neglect of ſo known and neceſſary a duty? can you with any conſcience, withhold bread, or cloths from your own, with what conſcience then, can you withhold counſel and inſtruction? will you make yours partakers of all you have in the world, only they ſhall have no benefit by the knowledge, or the grace you have received? Let your bowels inſtruct you, to be kind to their ſouls; and if you will by any arguments be perſwaded, to be thus kind to your own, you will thereby be prepared, and get ſuch an holy habit, as will make it more familiar, and eaſie to you to live profitably amongſt others.

Beloved, Hearken to me in this thing; will you hearken and try what you can do? if ever you would ſtand up in your Generations, as perſons of any uſe, or ſerviceableneſs to Chriſt, and the intereſt of his Goſpel; if you would not ſtand in the companies you come into, as inſignificant Cyphers, or as dumb Idols, that have mouths and ſpeak not, be perſwaded to uſe your tongues to better purpoſe at your homes.

3. *Next ſpeak unto your Brethren and fellow Chriſtians*, to thoſe that fear the Lord. Mal. 3. 16. *Thoſe that feared the Lord, ſpake often (one to another.)* Pſ. 66. 16. *Come to me (ye that fear the Lord) and I will tell you. We took ſweet counſel together*, ſaid the Pſalmiſt, *Pſ.* 55. 14. That is, we that were the Friends of

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the Lord, or took our ſelves to be ſuch, we conſulted together, or counſelled one another in the matters of God. It may be you may be more abaſhed, and afraid to ſpeak to thoſe that are without; you know not how they will take it; you doubt they may be dogs, that will tear and rend you; or at leaſt that they may be ſwine, and trample under feet, and ſcorn and deſpiſe thoſe holy words, you ſpeak unto them; they may laugh at you, and ſcoff at your counſels: But now with your Brethren in the Lord you may be more free, in confidence that they will accept, and take in good part, the good words you ſpeak, and will alſo be tender to you, and bear with your infirmities, if any be in ſpeaking.

Labour for a more profitable converſe, Chriſtians with Chriſtians, Believers with Believers; this will be more eaſie, becauſe you may preſume one another to be of the ſame Spirit; your good words will be unto them acceptable words, and the ſenſe of that, will invite you to ſpeak. Chriſtians have mutual need one of another, to help each other in the Lord; and yet there is a great fault amongſt us, that we are not thus mutually helpful. Like thoſe fooliſh Quakers, we have too many of our ſilent meetings, (as to our main concern) ſcarce a ſerious or ſavoury word comes from us, when we meet together.

Chriſtians, learn to amend this fault: Let us, as we have opportunity, edifie and *build up one another in the moſt holy Faith.* Jude 20. Let us *conſider one another, to provoke to love and to good works,* Heb. 10. 24. Friends, do not tempt one another, (as perhaps too often you do) to be vain as you are vain, to be carnal as you are carnal: Do not chil and damp each others ſpirits, by your carnal, and frothy, and impertinent diſcourſes; but quicken one another, do what you can to whet and ſet an edge upon each others ſpirits, and holy affections. What have you nothing to talk of

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when you come together, but of your trades, and your fields, or of news, or of the weather, and ſuch-like impertinences? Have you not a God? have you not Souls? have you not a Country, whether you are traveling? are you not upon a Journey to that bleſſed Land? have you not Friends and Kindred above, that are worth the ſpeaking of? have you not enemies and temptations here below, an evil world to travel through, many corruptions and afflictions to conflict withal, and have you not need of mutual counſel, comfort, encouragement, and eſtabliſhment one from another? How is it that you can find room for ſo much idle talk, when you have matters of ſuch weight and moment to fill up your time? when do you uſe to return with moſt comfort, and ſatisfaction upon your ſpirits? when you have been vainly merry together, or when you have been edifying one another in the moſt holy faith.

4. *Then in the next place ſpeak to thoſe which are without*, to poor ſinners, that are yet in their ſins. *Pſ.* 51. 13. *Then will I teach tranſgreſſours thy ways, and ſinners ſhall be converted unto thee.* Your ſpecial work poſſibly, may lye amongſt the houſhold of faith, but as you have opportunity, you muſt do good to all; *Gal.* 6. 10. All that need you muſt be made partakers of your ſpirituals, as well as of your temporal things: Thoſe that fear God, it may be, may ſometimes hear ſome good words from you, but have you never a word for thoſe that fear not God?

O pity your poor unconverted neighbours, and in your compaſſion, do what you can to pull them out of the fire; convince them of their ſins, warn them of their miſeries, perſwade them back from the Devil, invite and allure them in to Chriſt; let them hear often, of grace and ſin, of heaven and hell, of death and judgment, from your lips. See how the compaſſions of the Church, work towards the Heathen world,

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*Cant.*8.8. *We have a little sister that hath no breasts, what shall we do for our sister?* The poor Gentiles, they have no Scriptures, no Prophets, no Ordinances, no breasts of consolation; we have a poor sister that hath no breasts, what shall we do for her? they pitied the poor Gentiles, and in their pity, they consider what they might do for them. And why do not we carry it alike, to unconvered sinners? we have poor children, poor neighbours, that have no eyes, no heart; that have no Christ, no knowledge, no grace; poor blind neighbours, poor hardned ones, poor lost and undone souls; O what shall we do for these poor children and neighbours? have I never a word to speak, that might do them good? shall I be silent to them, whilest I see them perishing for want of instruction? Christians, have you the light with you? are there the words of wisdom and instruction with you? is there ever a word of grace, hid and laid up in your hearts, O keep it not in, withhold it not from poor perishing souls; speak to poor sinners, affright them from their sins, provoke them to repentance, perswade them to pray, to hear, to read, to consider, and to turn from the evil of their ways; and who knows what such words might do to their conversion and salvation?

Thus for the directions for the performance and managing of this holy practice.

2. The argument that I shall use to perswade you to it, shall be, *from the advantage of this practice for the reviving and improving our own souls in the grace of God.* The advantage will be great,

1. *From our necessary preparations to this duty* I have told you, that 'tis necessary to the better performance of this duty, to get your own hearts well furnisht with grace, to live more in the affecting thoughts of God; to get a zeal for Christ, to do him all the honour you can; to get more compassion to souls: without these things, whatever our attempts are, to converse more

profitably and ſpiritually one with another, we ſhall make nothing of it; and theſe our preparations are our improvements.

2. *From the practice of this duty.* Holy diſcourſe will keep our graces in action. 'Tis for want of action that our talents grow ruſty; by rubbing up the ſpirits of our brethren, we ſhall whet our own. Though the edge of your knife will be blunted by long cutting, 'tis not ſo here, the edge of your ſpirits will grow keener by uſe; your very work will be inſtead of a Whetſtone.

Who is like to grow rich in this world, he that lets his ſtock lie dead by him, or he that puts it to uſe, or imploys it in trade? thoſe that occupied with their talents, *Luke* 19.13, *&c.* made this return, *Thy pound, Lord, hath gained ten pounds*, ſays one; thy pound hath gained five pounds, ſaith another; but what could he ſay, that bound up his talent in a napkin? what greater encouragement to diligence in trading, then the hope of increaſe? the hope of the ingathering of the Husbandman, is his encouragement in his more plentiful ſcattering in ſowing. *He that ſoweth plentifully ſhall reap plentifully*, 2 *Cor.* 9.6. and therefore, *Bleſſed are they that ſow beſide all waters*, *Iſ.* 32.20. the communicative Chriſtian is ſowing where ever he comes, and where ever he ſows, thence ſhall he alſo reap, and gather his ſheaves into his own boſom.

Chriſtians, you ſay you have but little grace, and 'tis like enough you ſay true: but would you have more? go forth to ſow with that little you have. The more you ſcatter, the more you are like to gather. Would you have more love, and life, and power to ſerve and glorifie the Lord? be more diligent, in ſhedding abroad what you have. Reſolve, no longer to keep your Religion to your ſelves, put not your light under a buſhel, put it on a candleſtick, that it may give light to others, and God will increaſe both your light and your life. 'Tis to little purpoſe, onely to think of hear-

hearing more, or of praying more for a better heart, this alone, will never do; converſe more like Chriſtians, then ye ſhall be every day more Chriſtians then ye are. Learn of ſinners; Drunkards converſe like Drunkards, Rioters converſe like Rioters, profane hearts have ever a profane converſe; what do their tongues run of? what is their talk, when they come together, but of their cups, and their harlots, and their ſports? and what is their ordinary fruit? why, hereby they not onely propagate their own wickedneſs in others, one Drunkard makes another, and he another, and theſe more; but alſo, they every one, improve their own curſed ſtock; fomenting, and heating, and ſtirring up their own hearts luſts, and ſo make themſelves twofold more the children of hell then before. Chriſtians, learn of theſe brutes; do Drunkards converſe like Drunkards, do Worldlings converſe like Worldlings, do profane hearts uſe themſelves to profane converſes? and do you not ſee how mightily they grow, and improve hereby in their wickedneſs? what ſhould this teach you? but that Chriſtians converſe like Chriſtians. Let your Religion be the buſineſs of your communion, and then look for as much advance to your ſouls in godlineſs, by this holy converſe, according as you ſee ſinners to thrive in wickedneſs, by their wicked converſing one with another.

You ſee, Friends, I have been ſomewhat large in this direction, but is there not need of more words than theſe? is not this holy practice ſadly let fall amongſt us? doth not the world, ſomething or other of it, either quite ſhoulder it out, or thruſt it into a narrow room? Our heads are ſo full, and our hearts are ſo full, and hence our mouths are ſo full of carnal things, that there's little room left, for a few words of God, and the things of eternity to be interpoſed: And O what is the fruit? ſure that dreadful fall, which is ſo viſible, in the ſpirit and the whole practice of piety, is

both the mother and the off-spring of this grievous neglect; we are fallen sick, and therefore are so speechless; and then we spend and waste more and more by silence: Whilst sick bodies waste by speaking, sick souls waste more by silence.

What shall I say farther in this matter? The Lord heal a poor, barren, languishing people, the Lord touch our hearts with a coal from his Altar, and then touch our lips with a coal from our hearts. Brethren, I hope you come hither to learn your duty, and I hope you have a conscience, that will put you upon the practice of what you learn; have you yet learn'd, what an advantage 'tis to have lips of knowledge, and what a duty 'tis, that your speech be with grace? Remember what your Master said, *John* 13. 17. *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* I would not, that a man of you should be so unhappy, as to know and not to do. Do you know and believe, that holy communication would be an advance to your religion? then what shall be your practice in this matter? have you a tongue for the world, a tongue for your flesh, and no tongue for God and your Souls? O might I hear that word from your mouths, *thy word, O Lord, is within me as fire*, I am weary of forbearing, I will speak that I may be refreshed; Lord open thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth thy praises.

6. *Put upon stirring duties.* I shall mention only two. 1. *Prayer.* 2. *Fasting and Prayer.*

1. *Prayer.* Prayer in the text is noted to be a stirring duty; there's none that stirreth up himself, *there's none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself.* Had they prayed, and prayed as they ought, this would have stirred them up, or have been their stirring up themselves, to take hold of God: But neglecting to pray, they therein neglected to stir up themselves.

Prayer is a stirring duty. 1. 'Tis to stir up the Lord to their help, *Ps.* 35. 23. *Stir up thy self and awaken to*

my judgment, my God and my Lord. Pſ. 80. 2. *O Shepherd of* Iſrael, *thou that leadeſt* Joſeph *like a ſheep, thou that dwelleſt between the Cherubims, ſhine forth, ſtir up thy ſtrength, and come to ſave us.* The God of *Iſrael* ſometimes ſeems to be, as *Elijah* once ſaid mocking, of that falſe God *Baal*, 1 Kings 18. 27. *It may be he is aſleep, and muſt be awakened.* Though he be the keeper of *Iſrael*, and never ſlumbreth nor ſleepeth, yet he ſometimes carries it towards them, as if he were aſleep, and expects to be awakened by their cries upon him.

2. Eſpecially, prayer is for the ſtirring up our ſelves. There is a ſort of praying, dull, and cold, and formal praying, that's good for nothing, but to lay our ſouls aſleep. When conſcience begins to ſtir, and run upon ſinners, and fright them for their neglect of God, then they will to their prayers and blind devotions; and this muſt ſerve them, as a charm to allay and quiet conſcience, as *Davids* Muſick did, to drive away that evil ſpirit, that vexed *Saul*. Some ſinners conſciences will not let them be quiet, but dog them, and haunt them, and fright them into ſomething of religion; they dare not live without calling upon God, their conſciences will not ſuffer them to be quiet, under a total neglect, and thereupon ſomething muſt be done, which they can call praying, and then they are at eaſe, and can go on quietly in their ſins, without trouble or diſturbance; theſe mens praying ſerves them for nothing, but to lull them aſleep in their ſins.

But prayer rightly performed will ſtirr and awaken; prayer is ſaid to be, *a ſtriving with God*, Rom. 15. 30. *a wreſtling with God*, Gen. 32, 24. and this is our moſt effectually ſtriving with God, and wreſtling with God, our ſtriving and wreſtling with and ſtirring up our own hearts. Praying is not the ſaying of ſome good words but

the calling up all our powers, to come in and joyn in ſeeking the Lord. That you may particularly underſtand what a ſtirring duty Prayer is, conſider,

1. That in Prayer, we ſet our ſelves under the Eye of the great and mighty God of Heaven and Earth. It is a drawing night unto God, a lifting up our Eyes to the Everlaſting hills, a preſenting our ſelves before the throne of God, the throne of his Grace; a ſetting all the Attributes of God before our Eyes, his Allmightineſs, his Allſufficiency, his infinite greatneſs, dreadfulneſs, goodneſs and grace, &c; which all make up *that fearful Name, the Lord our God*, Deut 28. 58. and ſure Friends, ſuch a ſight of the glorious and dreadful God, will be a ſtirring ſight.

2. In Prayer we come to deal with God, about all the wonderful and aſtoniſhing things of Eternity; we are to have eternal life and death in our Eye, when we pray; and what will ſtir us, if Eternity, if a ſenſe that we are now treating with the Eternal God, about the eternal things, will not? O a ſenſe of this, that we are begging for our lives, begging for our immortal Souls, begging the everlaſting Kingdom, ſeeking our eſcape from the everlaſting Fire, a deep ſenſe of this upon our hearts will awaken them.

3 In Prayer there is a ripping open all the affrightning Evils that are in our Hearts. Confeſſion unbowels the Soul, and fetches up all the filth and rottenneſs of the Heart, lays open all the deadly Diſeaſes that are in the Heart; every wicked thought, and filthy luſt, and vile affection; all the falſhood and Hypocriſie, all the pride and malice, and envy, and frowardneſs of the Heart, are in our confeſſions brought forth, and laid open before the Lord. The Devils are rouz'd that lodged within us, and were taken

too little Notice of; and all the hazard and danger that our Souls are in, by theſe our wickedneſſes, will in our confeſſions be made to ſtand before our Eyes, and there cannot be ſuch a diſcovering of our wicked Hearts, and our danger that we are in, but it will affright and awaken us.

4. Prayer is the uniting of all our powers, and the engaging them all, in ſeeking the Lord. It ſtrains every ſtring, it bends all our forces upon the duty; it ſets all our faculties, our underſtandings, our memories, our wills, our affections, our conſciences on work; as the Pſalmiſt; Pſ. 103. 1. *Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, bleſs his Holy Name*; Pray to the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me, call upon his Name. Prayer is not tongue-work, or knee-work, but Soul-work; bleſs the Lord, O my Soul; and 'tis not a peice of an Heart, one ſtring of the Inſtrument, but every ſtring muſt be ſtrained and ſtruck up; underſtanding, memory, will, affections, all muſt joyn, all that is within me, bleſs his holy Name. All our faculties, and all our graces, our faith, our love, our hope, our deſires, whatever we have of God within us, all muſt be called forth to joyn in ſeeking of him.

5. Prayer is not only the employing and exerciſing our Souls, with all their faculties and graces, but the putting them forth to the height; not only the ſtriking every ſtring, but the ſtraining every ſtring to the height; the word in the original, which is tranſlated Acts. 12. 5. *Prayer without ceaſing*, ſignifies, inſtant, earneſt Prayer; or more properly, according to the notation of the word, ſtrained Prayer, prayer ſtretched out; and this is that praying which is ſtirring praying, the pouring forth our Soul in Prayer. *With my Soul have I deſired thee*, Iſ. 26. 9. the ſtraining and working up all within us,

us, every faculty and grace of our Hearts, to the height; the ſtirring up all our ſtrength in the work; this is that *Praying inſtantly*, required Rom. 12. 12. that *praying fervently*. Jam. 5. 16. that crying, and *crying mightily* unto God, unto which the Scriptures promiſe Audience.

Now when Prayer hath thus rouzed up our ſleepy Souls, ſet all our Faculties and Graces a ſtirring within us, and ſo gotten an heat in the heart, by the joynt and vigorous exerciſe of all within us, in the duty, when we have prayed our Souls awake, and all our Graces awake, and our Heart is waxen hot within us, we are therein prepared and put in a readineſs and diſpoſedneſs to, and ſhall feel our ſelves bent upon, the practiſe of every holy duty, in our whole courſe.

This therefore is my next direction; put upon Praying, and ſuch ſtirring Praying. Go ſet the Lord and all his Glory before your Eyes, and get a ſenſe of eternity upon your Hearts; rip open and lay forth to the light, all that filthineſs and garbage, and rottenneſs that is within you; bend all within you to ſeek the Lord, and go cry unto him, and cry ſo loud, that your own Souls may be awakened by your cry. Strive ſo with God in prayer, wreſtle ſo with the Almighty, that your own Soul may find its Hands and Legs. Friends, do not neglect Prayer, and do not deceive and undo your ſelves by your Prayers, do not pray your Souls aſleep, do not pray your conſciences aſleep, but awaken them.

'Tis a miſerable thing to conſider, how little ſome Profeſſors are in ſecret Prayer; ſometimes they pray, and ſometimes they can't tend it; their Cloſet is ſo ſeldom viſited, that it may be ſaid of the very way to it, as of the way to *Zion*, Lam. 1. 4. *the*

ways of Zion do mourn, becauſe none come to the ſolemn Feaſts. The Graſs grew upon their paths, becauſe they were ſo little trod. It is a miſerable thing that there is ſo little praying, ſuch ſeldom Praying as there is; but a worſe Evil then this, is that that little which is, is worth nothing; we go to Pray, many of us, as if we had a mind to mock God, and provoke him to his Face, we go to this duty, as if we had a mind to lay our Souls to ſleep, rather then to ſtir up and awaken them; 'tis no wonder there is no more light in our Paths, when there is no more life in our Duties; 'tis no wonder there are ſo many grey Hairs on the Head, ſo many wrinkles in the Face of our Religion, when it is ſo cold at the Heart; when our ſecret receſſes and retirements to God, are ſo Heartleſs and Spiritleſs; 'tis no wonder that Sin and Luſt and vanity do ſo ſwell and abound, that Grace and Holyneſs do ſo ſink and diſappear in our converſations, when that which ſhould kill Sin, and keep Grace alive (the Soul of Duty) is ſo little to be found.

Friends, if ever you would recover the beauty of your ways, begin in Secret, revive the power of Duty; pray conſtantly, pray frequently, and be fervent in Prayer; pray and ſtrive with God in Prayer; pray and ſtrive with your own hearts in Prayer; pray and wreſtle againſt the Devil, and the World, and your Sins in Prayer; ſuch praying would make the neſt too hot for the Devil, and your Sins; ſuch Praying would cure your colds; ſuch praying in the Morning, might be a means to keep you warm for all day; and ſuch praying in the Evening, would make you awake warm the next Morning.

Therefore Friends, pray hearken to the Word of the Lord; hearken to me in this thing, put your ſelves to it, put upon conſtant ſecret Prayer, and

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put upon ſuch ſtirring Prayer, ſuch inſtant and importunate Prayer; what ſay you, will you do it! will you hearken to me in this thing! I tell you Friends, if I may but prevail with you in this one thing, if you will obey and practiſe this one direction, this will make all the reſt to proſper; you will deny me in nothing, if you will but grant me this; and if you deny me here, if you will go on to ſatisfie your ſelves with cold and perfunctory Devotions, if you will not ſet to it to be lively and vigorous in your ſecret duties, I ſhall look upon all elſe that I have ſaid, as loſt, and that which will come to nothing; and therefore pray conſider with your ſelves, what you mean to do in this thing; will you begin this night? go not to pray as at other times, but put on upon the life of the duty, and then I ſhall hope to ſee a bleſſed and a viſible change upon the whole frame and face of your converſation. What ſay you therefore, will you do it! I am in great earneſt with you in this thing, ſince the ſucceſs of all that I have ſaid, to the recovering the decaying intereſt of Religion among you, depends ſo much upon this one thing; and therefore once again, I pray deny me not; and that you may not deny me, take particular notice of this one word more, that I ſhall add, remember theſe words anon in the Evening; when you are going to Pray, then remember what I have now ſpoken from the Lord to you, and accordingly ſet your Hearts to it, and the Lord grant you the preſence of his gracious and Almighty Spirit, to help you herein, to the praiſe of his Grace, and the comfort and advantage of your Souls.

For the more effectual fixing of this direction upon you, and for your improvement by it, I ſhall here remember you of two Directions, which I

have formerly Preached and publiſhed.

1. *Be ſo earneſt and intent in this duty, that you may feel your hearts enlarged,* in the lively actings and exerciſe of Grace, and ſo raiſed and warmed by your ſenſible communion with God, as may put you into a ſpiritual and heavenly frame, that if it be poſſible, you may come off your knees in a better and more lively diſpoſition of ſoul, than you had in your entrance upon your duty.

Do not ſatisfie your ſelves with the work done, but let your aims and endeavours be, to get ſomething more of God, that you may have to carry away with you, when you depart; that you may come out of your Cloſets, as *Moſes* came down from the Mount, *Exod.* 34.39. whoſe *face did ſhine*, and was a token, that he had been converſing with God. O let there at ſuch times, be a ſhining and a burning light raiſed up within you; come from your duties as men coming out of Heaven, with the very Sun-beams ſhining in your countenances, and with ſome tincture of Heaven upon your ſpirits. We come many times with no other ſpirits from our duties, than we come out of our Shops or Fields; with no more ſenſe and ſavour of God, than if we had never been near him. O 'tis a ſign that thou haſt but trifled in thy duties, that thou neither hadſt, nor much mindedſt to have communion with God in it; certainly ſincere communion with God, will leave ſome divine impreſſions behind it. Well, every time you go to pray, put hard for it, to get you into ſuch a divine and ſpiritual frame before you have done.

2. *Whatever better or more ſpiritual frame you are gotten to in duty, be careful to maintain it, and keep it alive afterwards.* See to it, that your ſpirits do not preſently ſink and cool, and grow dull and carnal,

nal again, when you have been thus quickened and ſpiritualized; hath there been an holy fire kindled in you? O keep it burning, keep it flaming, and let it not be covered over with aſhes; get your hearts to be alive in your duties, and keep them alive from duty to duty. In the Old Teſtament, though their Sacrifices were offer'd but morning and evening, yet the fire that kindled them, was not to go out night nor day; there muſt be fire kept alive from the morning Sacrifice, to kindle the evening Sacrifice, and fire left from the evening to kindle the morning Sacrifice; O Friends, how often is it, that though at our morning Sacrifice a fire be kindled, that it's quenched and loſt before the evening, through the careleſneſs and negligence of our hearts; Sin and the World have a whole days time to quench and put out, what an hours duty hath been kindling, and ſo at the return of our duty-ſeaſons, we find our hearts at the ſame loſs, in the ſame deadneſs and hardneſs as before. Beloved, theſe two Directions, of getting up our hearts into a lively frame in duty, and of keeping up that holy frame from duty to duty, though there be ſome difficulty, and it will coſt you pains to practiſe them to purpoſe, yet the advantage you will hereby gain, will be abundantly worthy all your pains; and therefore I pray remember them; if you do in good earneſt intend an advancing in Religion, let theſe two Directions be before your eyes every day; you have them preached to you, and you have them written for your uſe, the Lord write them upon your hearts, and hold them before your eyes. This courſe will be as the whetting our Inſtruments, and keeping them keen for our work; how much work may be done, and with much more eaſe, by a cutting than a blunted Inſtrument, *Eccl.*10.10. *If the*

Iron be blunt, and he do not whet the edge, he muſt put to more ſtrength; 'twill coſt you much more pains to make any work in your Religion, whilſt your edge is blunted; a dull heart will do little, and that little, not without much pains. By the courſe preſcribed whet your ſpirits, and keep them with a good edge, and then all your work will be the more eaſily carried on. To this I ſhall add,

3. *Let your prayers be purſued in your practice.* Whatever Grace you pray for, whatever Sin you pray againſt, follow after the one, and fight againſt the other, in your daily practice: Let Prayer and Practice joyn hand in hand, and both drive the ſame way. Think not you have done your whole days work, when you have prayed morning and evening; Religion muſt be the buſineſs of your whole time; (*be thou in the fear of the Lord*, be thou at the work of the Lord, *all the day long*, Prov. 23. 17.) and not the buſineſs of an hour or two. When you have been praying for an heavenly mind, that God would help you to live in the ſpirit, to ſet your affections on things above, to have your converſation in Heaven; when you have ended your Prayer, what ſhould ye now do? Why then to thinking on heavenly things; let your thoughts run upon and be working more throughout the day, upon theſe holy things; to pray for an heavenly mind, and never to think more of heavenly things, all the day long, till you come to pray again, what will ſuch praying come to? When you pray for a willing, obedient and fruitful life, what ſhould you do? Go and take pains with your hearts, to bring them on, and to hold them cloſe to your ſeveral duties. When you have been praying againſt Sin, for power over a proud heart, or a froward heart, or a covetous worldly heart, what ſhould you now do?

do? Why then ſet your watch againſt your ſins; take heed of every proud thought, of every froward word; take heed and beware of all covetous practices; ſet your ſelves to the mortifying of theſe ſins, to reſtraining your ſelves from the actings of them, to pray againſt pride, or to pray againſt covetouſneſs, and as ſoon as you have done, to leave your hearts looſe for them, to carry it as proudly, or as frowardly as before, to be as buſie for the world, as eager in hunting after it; what's this but to ſet your Prayers and your Practices together by the ears, to deſtroy the things you have been building, to deſtroy by your Practices, what you have been building by your Prayers? And whilſt this hath been the voice of your Prayer, Lord, deliver me from a proud, or froward, or covetous heart, your Practices ſay, I care not whether this Prayer be heard or no; I had rather be let alone and left under the power of them. If ever you would that your praying ſhould come to any thing, let your Prayers and Practices drive the ſame way. Let it not ſuffice you, to pray for a more gracious and fruitful heart and life, to pray for a more mortified heart, a more ſelf-denying courſe, but ſet to it to put your Prayers into practice. Let the ſtream of your care, the ſtream of your endeavours, run the ſame way with the ſtream of your prayers and deſires; and that's the ſtirring Prayer I would have you give your ſelves to, ſuch as may effectually overpower the ſtream and courſe of your life, and carry it on according to the ſtream of your Prayers.

O Friends! If of all that I have ſaid, theſe three laſt words might be remembred and obſerved; if in every Prayer you henceforth make, you would diligently ſtrive to get you up into a ſpiritual and lively frame. If 2. you would carefully maintain

this

this bleſſed frame afterwards, from duty to duty. If you would 3. ſet to the practice of thoſe things you pray that God would enable you to, what do you think would be the ſucceſs ? O what a cure would be wrought ! O what a bleſſed change might we expect, to appear upon you and all your Religion !

2. *Faſting and Prayer.* In the former particular I ſpake of Prayer, as an *ordinary duty*, here as *an extraordinary*, as annexed to that extraordinary duty *of Faſting and Humiliation.* We may ſay of that evil ſpirit, *that Spirit of ſlumber and of a deep ſleep* that's fallen upon us, as Chriſt ſaid of that Devil, *Mat.* 17. 21. *This kind goeth not out but by prayer and faſting.* Extraordinary Diſeaſes muſt have extraordinary Remedies.

Hitherto I have ſpoken moſtly to our perſonal Caſes, now I ſhall ſpeak with more reſpect to the publick Caſe of our People and Age, and ſhall direct you,

1. *How you may moſt effectually ſtir up a ſpirit of Prayer, in your days of Humiliation.*

2. *How you may moſt ſucceſsfully perform this duty.*

1. *How you may moſt effectually ſtir up a ſpirit of Prayer in your days of Humiliation.* And ſo,

1. *There's ſomething in the very abſtinence*, that conduceth to the ſtirring up the ſpirit of Prayer. Abſtinence is pinching upon the fleſh, and ſhould be ſo much, in ſuch days, as may afflict the body firſt, and thereby the ſoul. The abſtinence of a Faſt, ſhould be *afflicting abſtinence*, as far forth as the body will bear it, without prejudice to its health, and ſo becoming an hindrance rather than a furtherance of the duty.

There's a two-fold failing too common in our days of Humiliation.

1. *In*

1. *In the time:* Moſtly what we call a Day of Humiliation, comes to no more but a *few Hours of Prayer.* It's ſaid of a Faſt, *Lev.*17. 31. *It ſhall be a Sabbath of Reſt to you,* that is, 1. It was to be a whole day, as a Sabbath is. 2. It muſt be wholly ſpent in the proper exerciſes of it, a Sabbath of Reſt it muſt be in this extraordinary duty, there muſt be a laying aſide our ordinary works, and the whole time ſpent either in the publick or private worſhip of the day. How ſeldom is it that we hear of ſuch a Faſt! Some Hours, as I ſaid, we ſometimes ſpend together in ſeeking the Lord; but when do we keep a Day to the Lord? The morning of the day, is uſually as other mornings; we are as buſie at our Callings, and may be, more buſie to diſpatch our work out of hand; and ſo come hot out of our ſhops and fields, with our heads full, and hearts full of our worldly affairs, and as ſoon as ever the Publick Duty is over, then away to our work again. Is it ſuch a Faſt the Lord hath choſen? will ye call this a Day of Humiliation?

Chriſtians, 'tis well that you ſpend ſome Hours of Prayer, but call not That a Day of Humiliation; when ever you ſet apart a Day for Faſting, let it be a Sabbath of Reſt to you: begin it in ſecret, and ſeparating your ſelves from all your unneceſſary ordinary works, hold you to the duty of the day, (as your ſtrength will bear it) to the end of the day. Let the private part of it, both before and after Publick Exerciſes, be ſpent as your Lord's days are, in ſuitable converſes with God. Were this more obſerved, we might expect more of Spirit and of Power in the duty, and more Fruits afterward.

2. *There is alſo a failing in the Abſtinence of the Day.* How often have I known it, that the Abſtinence in a day of Humiliation, hath been no more than

than the ſparing of one Meal, which hath been made up by a larger Break-faſt, and perhaps a Feaſt, at leaſt a full Meal at Supper? and ſometimes, in the intervals of the duties, Wine, Cake, Sweet-meats, Tobacco, and ſuch like refreſhments, are allowed and uſed. No particular Rules for the degree of Abſtinence can be preſcribed to all ſorts of perſons, but this ſhould be obſerved in the general; 1. That there be ſuch Abſtinence uſed both as to quantity and quality) as may beſt ſubſerve the Spiritual duties of the day, eſpecially that of afflicting the Soul; and therefore 2. That not only our full Meals be forborn, but no Wine or ſtrong Drink, *&c.* no not ſo much as a Pipe of Tobacco be allowed, for the preſent pleaſure or refreſhment of it: This latter, concerning the uſe of Tobacco, I the more particularly mention, becauſe I ſuppoſe it is not ſo much thought on; many of thoſe that uſe it much, find great pleaſure in the uſe of it, and it may be can give no good account of their preſent need of it, and yet will uſe it at ſuch times. If it be really needed, as in ſome caſes it may, and by ſome perſons, let it be uſed: But if *Daniel* would eat *no pleaſant Bread*, nor Fleſh, nor Wine came into his mouth, *Dan.* 10.3. If the *Jews* be reproved, *Iſ.* 58. 3. that in the day of their Faſt *they find their pleaſure*, then any thing taken as an exhilarating refreſhment, which is not neceſſary to the preſent duty, is a tranſgreſſion.

Well, this will be ſomething towards the ſtirring us up in Prayer, ſelf-afflicting Abſtinence.

2. Eſpecially, a *deep conſideration of the caſe we are in*, will moſt effectually do it: *Qui neſcit orare, diſcat navigare*; Tempeſts will teach even profane Mariners to pray; if any thing will do it, afflictions will fetch out our very hearts in our Prayers,

and

and is not iniquity an affliction? Sure if it be, we are in an afflicted ſtate; for conſider a little again, how grievouſly iniquity doth abound! I ſhall not now lead you a voyage over the Seas, and remember you how 'tis abroad; how the Devil drives almoſt all the world before him, filling them with all unrighteouſneſs, and what a ſmall handful there are that follow Chriſt, and how very little of ſerious Religion or Chriſtianity, and how much iniquity there is in thoſe few.

Let us at preſent inquire, how 'tis with us at home; may we not take the words of the Text into our mouths, and complain, *We*, even *we are all as an unclean thing, and our righteouſneſſes are as filthy rags; we fade as a leaf, and our iniquities like the wind are taking us away.* Who can ſay, Mine heart is clean, I have kept me from mine iniquity? who of us will not ſay, My righteouſneſs is as a filthy rag? Or if any will not ſay thus concerning themſelves, muſt not we ſay it for them and of them? To put in but a word of the profane Rout, the open enemies of Religion and Righteouſneſs, whoſe wickedneſs hath left the ſhade of the twilight, and the covert of the night, and who are grown up to that impudence, as to ſhew their ſhame in the Sun-light; not to ſpeak much neither of their Prophets and Teachers, amongſt whom (though through mercy there are that deal faithfully, yet) ſome of them cannot, others will not tell them of their tranſgreſſions, or heal their hurt; what Snuffs are there in ſome of the Candleſticks? what dark Lanthorns are many of thoſe, that ſhould be burning and ſhining lights? Seers without eyes, lame Leaders, ſickly Healers of the *hurt of the daughter of our people*; ſuch ſome of them are, as if God had ſaid concerning us, as *Micah* 2. 11. *If any man walking in the ſpirit of falſhood,*

do

do lie and do propheſie of wine and ſtrong drink, he ſhall be even the Prophet of this people. To let theſe paſs alſo, let us conſider how 'tis with the *Sinners in Zion*, with thoſe of us who profeſs to have ſeparated themſelves from the follies and filthineſſes of the Land, to the Law of their God; may not even theſe alſo complain, Even we are as an unclean thing, our filthineſs is ſtill in our skirts. What is our Religion? what is our Righteouſneſs? what a totter'd maimed thing is it? Ah, how little Religion is there in our Religion? how little of the Spirit, how little of the power, how glorious ſoever the form appears? How much unrighteouſneſs is there mingled with our righteouſneſs? is not our Gold mix'd with Droſs, and our Wine with Water? What a ſpirit of vanity, what hypocriſie, pride, headineſs, cenſoriouſneſs, peeviſhneſs, is there to be found, and all cryed up for Religion? What wood, and hay, and ſtubble is there built upon the foundation? Chriſtians and yet carnal, Chriſtians and yet earthly, and ſenſual, having not the Spirit, how much ſoever of the Name of Religion in them?

And amongſt them that were once better, how many are there that muſt go on with the complaint, and confeſs, *we all do fade as a leaf*, we wither, and waſt, and conſume, and are even dried away? And it is not here and there a fading leaf; does not the Tree fade? ſo that 'tis but here and there a leaf, that is not wither'd away. Were it only a few backſliding perſons, the matter were not ſo ſad; but is it not a backſliding Age, may we not be called a backſliding People, for the multitude of Backſliders that are amongſt us? ſcarce living enough to ſerve for mourners over the dead.

As I ſaid in the beginning, were it only the Wilderneſs and Commons of the world, and the Tents

of

of the uncircumciſed that we had to complain of, it were ſad enough; but O the Field of the Lord, his Floor, his Fold, his Family, his Vineyard! What tares are there in his Fields? what a deal of Chaff in his Floor? what a general bane and rot is there among his Flock, few ſound ones left? What an Hoſpital is his Houſe, of blind, and lame, and ſick Souls? what wild Vines do fill up his Vineyard?

——Quis talia fando
Temperet à lachrymis!——

Friends, ſhould you ſee your own Houſes fallen into ruinous heaps, your fruitful Fields become a prey to the Locuſts and the Caterpillars, your Flocks dying away of the rot; if you ſhould ſee among your poor children, that were once ſtrong, beautiful, healthful, hopeful, one bewitched into a Changeling, another a Cripple, another a Lunatick, a Fool or Idiot, others poſſeſſed of a Devil, O how would ſuch a ſight rend your bowels, and tear the very caul of your heart? And is not this lamentable caſe, the caſe of the Houſhold of God?

But is this all? may we not go on with the complaint? *And yet there is none* (very few) *that calleth upon thy Name, that ſtirreth up himſelf to take hold on Thee.* O what hard work have the poor Miniſters of Chriſt to ſtir any of theſe miſerable Souls, to bring them to their ſenſes, to bring them to their knees, to awaken them to ſeek out after their recovery! They will not ſtir up themſelves, no they will not be ſtirred up by us, by all our cries and callings upon them; though we call upon them, yet we cannot bring them to it, to call upon God. Some of them will not be brought to know their diſeaſe, and thoſe that can't but know it, yet will not conſider it,

nor

nor concern themſelves ſo much about it, as to ſeek their cure, but there (poor wretches) they lye, dying away in their ſleep themſelves, and every one infecting others with the ſame Lethargy, and going on to rock one another, till even a whole Countrey become a generation of Sleepers.

How often have I heard, ſome of theſe ſleepy Souls, complaining of this dull and declining age, and yet have not had the Heart to ſay, am not I one of the ſleepers! how many have I known, that have confeſſed their own declinings, and yet away they go, and quickly forget their own confeſſions; and to day is with them as yeſterday, and to morrow like to be as to day. O England, England, thou which wert once, as Jeruſalem, *great among the Nations, and Princeſs among the Provinces*, how art thou fallen? where is thy Glory? thou haſt the light ſtill with thee, but where is the love, and the life? where is thy beauty, (the beauty of Holyneſs) where is thy zeal and thy ſtrength? what are thy Sabbaths, and thy ſolemn meetings and ordinances become to thee, but even as a miſcarrying Womb and dry Breaſts? how few Children are brought forth within thee, and how many of them that are ready to famiſh at thy feet?

What ſilly Doves, without an Heart; what wandring ſtars, hollow veſſels, what ſounding braſs and tinkling Cymbals, are moſt of thoſe become, who boaſt themſelves to be thy Glory? thou haſt a few names, who have not defiled their garments, nor ſtained their Glory, nor reproached the Name of their God, but Lord how few!

How ſadly is that Scripture fullfiled in thee. 2 *Tim.* 3. 1. &c. have not thoſe perillous times overtaken thee, wherein Men are, *lovers of their own ſelves, covetous, boaſters, proud, blaſphemers, diſobedient to Parents,*

Parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-brakers, false accusers, or make-bates, *incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, Heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more then lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.* O how art thou fallen?

Yea, *and whither art thou falling?* thy righteousness is become as filthy rags, the yoke of thy transgressions is bound upon thee, they are wreathed and come upon thy Neck; thou art faded like a leaf; and dost thou not see, that thine iniquities like the wind are taking thee away? thou mayest say this day, where is my beauty? where is my Glory? and how suddenly mayest thou be forced to take up this for thy lamentation,

O now, where is my God! for these things I weep, mine Eye mine Eye, runs down with water, because the comfort that should relieve me is gone far from me. How hath the Lord covered me with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from Heaven to Earth, the beauty of England, and remembred not his foot-stool in the day of his anger? the Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pityed; he hath brought us down to the ground; he hath polluted the Kingdom, and the Princes thereof; he hath cut off in his fierce anger, the Horn of England, *and he burneth against it, like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about. He hath violently taken away his tabernacle, he hath destroyed his places of the Assembly; he hath caused the solemn Feasts and Sabaths to be forgotten, he hath cast off his Altar, he hath abhorred his Sanctuary, he hath given me up into the hands of the Enemy, and made me a desolation.*

Friends, open your Eyes and see, if the Symptoms of such desolation, be not visible amongst us; go into the City, go into the Villages; go into the

ary; go into our Habitations, and ſee if Death be not come up intoour windowes, and deſolation ready to enter; how is it, that you that have the Hearts of Chriſtians, your mouths ſhould not be ſounding with ſuch Lamentations, *My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very Heart, my Heart maketh a noiſe within me, mine Eyes do fail with tears, my Liver is poured out; O that my Head were waters, and mine Eyes were a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and Night, for the fallen daughter of my People.*

O do not now any longer go about to palliate or mince the matter; O let not the blind Eye, or the hard Heart, whilſt it goes about to excuſe, aggravate our Sin and our ſhame. Our diſeaſes are too great to be palliated, and too many to be hid. He is a ſtranger in our *Iſrael*, that ſees not how deadly ſick we are.

Friends conſider it, and make not light of it; ponder the ſtate we are in, and give not over, till your Hearts break and bleed within you, and ſo go and pray before the Lord. Methinks it ſhould ſtir you; O when ye go to pray, carry a deep ſenſe upon your Hearts, and hear the cry in your Ears, of the Sin and the miſery of thoſe you are praying for. Hear the cry of *the poor blind and hardned Sinners* amongſt us; theſe ſtones cry out, their (miſery does) let fall a tear over us, lift up a Prayer for us; Hear the cry of *your Enemies*, who curſe you, and perſecute you for Religion ſake; their caſe calls upon you, bleſs us that curſe you, pray for us that deſpitefully uſe you, and perſecute you; hear the cry of *your brethren in the Lord*, eſpecially your Sin-ſick brethren, your Soul-ſick brethren, your decayed and backſliding brethren; do not their caſes cry loud in your Ears, Help, help us, by your Prayers? hear *your poor Children* and Families crying, what ſhall (we) do?

do? What will become of us, if there ſhould be a going on in this ſinning and ſinking, 'till the Goſpel be taken from us? For our ſakes try what ye can do, beſiege the Throne of Grace, take hold of the God of Grace, that he leave us not, to die for want of Inſtruction. Hear *Magiſtrates* and *Miniſters* crying, We need your help as much as any; cry mightily unto the Lord for us. Hear a *whole Kingdom*, yea hear the whole World, crying, Pray to the Lord for us.

O Brethren, how much matter of Prayer have we, how many moving and heart-breaking caſes have we before us? Set them before your eyes, lay them deeply to heart, and this will quicken you in Prayer. All theſe caſes, and multitudes more ſend in their Bills, and paſſionately cry in your ears; now try what you can do to help in a time of need; to help a poor languiſhing Nation, to help poor Magiſtrates and Miniſters, to help poor ſinning and dying Souls; you that make mention of the Lord, now keep not ſilence; bow your knees, call up all your ſighs and groans, pour out your tears, pour out your ſouls, ſet heart to heart, and prayer to prayer, unite your ſtrength, and cry in the ears of the Almighty, *O Lord behold, for we are very vile, we are very low; ariſe and ſave us, ſave, Lord, or we periſh.*

2. *How you may moſt ſucceſsfully perform this Duty.* In anſwer to this, take theſe few following Directions.

1. *Make God your Friend*, and ſee that there be no ſtanding controverſie betwixt Him and your Souls. See that you be ſincere Converts to God, and have a good conſcience towards God; ſee that ye be reconciled to God by the blood of *Jeſus*, and be not aliens and enemies, and that matters be kept

fair and clear betwixt God and your Souls. Is it peace betwixt the Lord and you, or is there not a particular controverſie that he hath with you? Conſider, if the Lord hath not ſomewhat againſt you, and ſuch as hath provoked him to anger againſt you; Get the controverſie to be taken up, make your own peace firſt, and then you will be fit to be Interceſſors for others. If I had a Petition to preſent to the King, I would not put it into the hands of a Rebel, no nor into his who were under his Princes frown; I would put it into the hands of a Favourite, and ſo ſhould have the more hope to ſpeed: If you would do your friends a kindneſs in Heaven, ſee that you hold your own friendſhip there; *If I regard iniquity in mine heart, God will not hear my Prayer, Pſ. 66.18.* Pray for whom you will, for your ſelf, or your friends, 'tis like to come to all one, as if you held your peace; God will not hear you, whilſt you regard iniquity in your hearts. Haſt thou Sin in thee; and Sin that thou alloweſt in thy ſelf? what ever it be, great or little, open or ſecret, purge it away, and caſt it from thee, or God will not hear thee, *Prov. 15.8. The prayer of the upright is his delight.* Give me the holy Souls, the humble, the tender, the watchful, the *Jacobs*, the *Daniels*, the *Noahs*, the plain-hearted, them that walk with God, and are highly favoured of the Moſt High, to appear before the Lord for me.

Thoſe that are in their Sins, and utterly Strangers from God, and thoſe that have declined in Godlineſs, and are become Wanderers from the Lord, what hope is there of any ſervice that their Prayers will do? *God heareth not Sinners; but if any man be a worſhipper of God, and doth his will, him he heareth.* John 9.31.

Beloved, a poor languiſhing Nation calls upon you,

you, for the help of your Prayers; but alas, what help is there in them? To have a company of poor hard-hearted, impenitent, and dead Sinners, or of ſick and looſe and carnal Profeſſors, to have ſuch a company gather'd together to pray; there is as much hope in it, as if the Blind, and the Lame, and the Bed-ridden of a Nation, ſhould be gathered together into an Army to fight; as great ſucceſs is like to be obteined by ſuch a ſinful congregation aſſembled to pray, as would be by ſuch an impotent Army, gather'd together to fight: One ſincere upright hearted Saint, will do more than a whole congregation of praying Sinners. *Acts* 27. we read of a Ship in a Storm, and a deſperate hazard of being caſt away; all viſible hope of its being ſaved was cut off: the Mariners could do little more in the Ship, and ſuch a company of profane Wretches could do nothing in Heaven: But behold, one *Paul*, he prays, and he prevails; the Lord gave him his life, and the lives of all them that ſailed with him; the Mariners and the Soldiers might have prayed while they would, but the Ship had been never the more ſecured from ſinking, if *Paul* had not been with them.

Indeed it's the duty of Sinners to be preſent in days and in the exerciſes of Humiliation, and there may be this advantage of it, They may by this means be converted, and ſo 1. There's one more added to the number of God's Remembrancers, there's one more Souldier added to the Praying Army: If there were hundreds or thouſands of Converts more brought in, ſo many would there be added to joyn in their ſtrength to wreſtle with God. 2. By every new Convert, God's Intereſt is increaſed in ſuch a people; by how many more Converts there are, by ſo much the more hath God

to loſe, if ſuch a people ſhould miſcarry. Well, this is the firſt Direction, if you would that your praying ſhould be to any purpoſe, Make God your Friend.

2. *Make often uſe of your Friend* in your perſonal caſes, live a Praying life; thoſe that are much in Prayer, are moſt like to be mighty in Prayer. He that deals much with the Lord in prayer, will have many experiences of God's gracious dealings with him in anſwer to his Prayers. You will hereby prove, that Prayer is not ſuch an helpleſs and inſignificant Duty, as thoſe that diſuſe themſelves to it are apt to diſtruſt it to be; you will never give off your caſes for hopeleſs, whilſt there is this way open, to go to God.

He that uſes to go before the Lord, will be the more able to go with boldneſs and confidence before him. He that hath been often heard for himſelf, in his perſonal or Family-neceſſities, will ſpeak with the more confidence for his friends or people. I have ſeen how Prayer will help a poor diſtreſſed perſon, a poor diſtreſſed family, and why may it not prevail for a diſeaſed and diſtreſſed Nation? Since I have found, that the Lord hath heard me, when I have been ſeeking him for my ſelf, and for mine houſe, O what hope doth this give, that he will alſo hear me, now that I am ſeeking him for his own Houſe.

Beloved, when any of you that fear God, are under any preſſing ſtraits, and deſire the help of Prayer, to whom do you uſe to ſeek? you do not call together the lazy, and the idle, and the careleſs ones, that uſe not to call upon God; you do not ſend to ſuch, to come and pray for you; but you will pick out and call together the praying people, thoſe that are moſt converſant in this duty; what's the reaſon of this? why

why, your conſciences tell you, that if there be any whoſe Prayers are like to help you, theſe are they, the men of Prayer. Be you ſuch in both theſe reſpects, be ye thus prepared, *Be the friends of God, and be often with God*, and then I will add no more, but as the Prophet, *Joel* 2. 15, 16, 17. Then come and *ſanctifie your Faſts, call your ſolemn Aſſemblies; gather the people, ſanctifie the congregation, aſſemble the Elders, let the Bridegroom go forth out of his Chamber, and the Bride out of her Cloſet*; let the Tradeſmen come out of their Shops, and the Husbandman out of the fields; *let the Miniſters and people of the Lord weep before his Altar*, and let them ſay, and cry, and cry aloud, *Spare thy people, O Lord, heal thy languiſhing heritage, be not angry with them till thou haſt conſumed them; let not the ungodly ſay to them in thy reproach, Where is your God, your Chriſt, and your Religion?* And who knows but the Lord may hear, and what ever evils be upon us, and to whatever diſtance he is withdrawn from us, he may yet return and repent, and leave a bleſſing behind him, and may be jealous for his Land, and pity his people and heal them.

For a concluſion, let me add a word or two, both to thoſe that have heard, and to them alſo that read theſe words. I am unwilling (if I could help it) to make an end before I have done, before the work be done, for which all this hath been ſpoken and written. Have I been all this while beating the Air, or ſpeaking to the Wind, or writing in Sand? Muſt I at laſt ſit down with the ſhame and the grief of the diſappointed? Mine heart and mine eye is upon ſucceſs; I have been plowing in hope, and harrowing and ſowing in hope; O thou, who art the hope of *Iſrael*, make thy ſervant partaker of his hope.

Succeſs is of God; *Paul* may plant, and *Apollo* may water, but it is God that gives the increaſe: We are they whom the Lord hath ſet to watch and give warning, to convince and reprove, to inſtruct and exhort, but who is it, that muſt give the fruit? As hard as our work is, as ſmall ſucceſs as we yet ſee, yet *therefore we faint not, becauſe we truſt in the living God, who is the Saviour.*

Where is the Lord? he, who hath ſaid, *My word ſhall not return unto me void, but it ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and ſhall proſper in the thing whereto I ſent it.* Wherefore hath the Lord ſpoken? Is it that we may go and fall backward, and be broken, and ſnared, and taken? Is it for the hardning of thoſe that have ſinned, that they may not repent? Is it for the ſealing up of the eyes of thoſe that ſee not, that they may be the more blind? Is it for the ſearing of brawned ſpirits, that they may be more hard? Is his Light only to dazle and put out our eyes, and his ſtrokes only to hammer into more ſenſeleſneſs, and to drive away his wanderers farther from him? God forbid, God forbid, we hope better things; we long, we wait for better iſſues; and if the Lord hath any pleaſure in us, if utter ruin be not determined upon us, he will give good ſucceſs, he will recover and revive us, he will humble and heal us. Succeſs is of God, *O, our God, we have no might, nor know we what to do, only our eyes are upon thee.*

But though it be the Lord that gives ſucceſs, 'tis we and you all that muſt ſeek it, and be working towards it. 'Tis not the beſt Phyſician that can cure you, unleſs you take his Medicines, and follow his Preſcriptions; he that reaches down his hand to help you up out of the Pit into which you are fallen, will not lift you out, unleſs you will do what you can to help your ſelves.

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In order to your ſeeking and obtaining good ſucceſs, let me ask,

1. Thou whoſe eyes are now upon theſe words, *Art thou one of them whoſe doleful caſes have been here opened and lamented?* Art thou a Sleeper, a loytering or back-ſliding Soul? Whilſt thou haſt been looking on this Glaſs, haſt thou not ſeen thine own face in the company? Hath not this Word found thee out, and ſaid unto thee, even unto thee, as *Nathan* to *David*, *Thou art the man?* Or haſt thou ſo much as asked the queſtion of thy ſelf, *Am I not one of them?* If thou haſt not, read over again; go back before thou read forward, conſider again and again, before thou conclude, I am none of them; whoever they be, mine heart (I hope) is right with God, I am free. Put me not off with an (I hope I am none of them) but inquire more narrowly, till thou haſt put it out of doubt what thou art.

2. If thou ſeeſt *thou art one of theſe wretched ſouls, art thou content to continue thus?* Is it ſafe, is it comfortable to thee thus to live? Wilt thou die a Backſlider, or but a Babe? Wilt thou venture it to continue as thou art? Art thou at a point with Chriſt, that thou wilt no more of him than thou haſt; nor ſhall he have more of thee than at this day? Shall thy fleſh and this world ſtill go ſuch great ſharers with him? Wilt not thou come back, to be only his, to be wholly his? Wilt thou ſay as thoſe *Jer.* 2. 25. *There is no hope*; no hope of prevailing with me? Wilt thou ſay, *I have loved ſtrangers, and after them I will go?* I love this world, I love my carnal friends, I love my eaſe, and my idleneſs, and my liberty, and I can't part with them; the life I live is better than that ſevere life you call me to. Art thou indeed of this mind, and doſt mean to hold thee of the ſame mind, till thou comeſt to

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the Grave? Do thy tender-hearted friends weep over thee, to see what a Child or a Changeling thou art, and dost thou bless thy self in thine own heart, and say thou art well enough? Art thou come from the Fountain to the Cistern, and wilt thou never go back from the Cistern to the Fountain? Wilt thou dwell in thy Fools Paradise, and venture thy shutting out of the Paradise of God? Carest thou not that thou perish, feareſt thou not that thy Sickness and thy Sleep may be unto death? Man, what meanest thou? Man, what an Heart hast thou, that either thou wilt not know thou art in an evil case, or dost not regard whether ever it be better with thee? Hast thou never a Tear to let fall over thy miserable Soul? never a Sigh to breath out after Redemption from thy misery? If thou sayest, 'tis not so bad with thee, take heed; *How canst thou say, I am not polluted?* How canst thou say, I am not degenerated? *See thy way in the valley, and know what thou hast done. Jer.* 2. 23. Trace thy self in all thy goings, and dealings with God in the world. Ask thy Closet, which is so seldom visited; ask thy Bible, which is so seldom look'd into; ask thy companions, and thy unsavoury converse with them; ask thy Family, and thy unprofitable converse with them; ask thy Fields and thy Farms, thy Shop and thy Money, with whom thy heart hath so long dwelt; yea and ask thy Conscience a little more strictly than thou usest to do, and see if all will not tell thee, the Charge of the Lord against thee is too true. It cannot be denied, but that thou art come to a very pittiful pass; what, and yet no mind to amendment? When shall it once be? what never, what never? Must we leave you thus? must we continue preaching to you, and crying after you so long in vain, till

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the Lord ſay to us, *Let them alone*, ſpeak no more to them, pray no more for them, let them periſh in the hardneſs of their Hearts; Ah Friends, ſhall this be all the good we can do, to mourn over you, that we can do you no good? or ſhal ltherebe yet hope among you, concerning this thing, that yet at length ye will repent and return?

The truth is, our ſpiritual Diſeaſes do ſo lurk, that they are not eaſily diſcerned; and having more of pleaſure in them, then of pain, the patient is impatient of his cure. Thoſe that are ſick of a ſleepy Evil, are loth to be ſtirr'd; *yet a little more ſleep*, ſaith the Sluggard, yet a little more of this eaſie Idle life. Jer. 4. 14. *O Jeruſalem, wilt thou not be made clean*? by the queſtion, it ſeems they would not, and that which ſollowes, *When ſhall it once be*? the ſenſe of it, is not barely, when [ſhall] it be done? but when wilt thou be willing to have it done? when wilt thou be willing to be made clean? *Lord if thou wilt*, (ſayes the Leper) *thou canſt make me clean*. Sinner, ſayes the Lord, if [thou] wilt once, I will, Be thou clean; but though God would, yet Sinners will not.

What *Demas* is there of you, that hath forſaken the Lord, and embraced this preſent World; what *Diotrephes*, that from walking Humbly with God, hath his Heart lifted up, and loveth the prehemineence, that do heartily wiſh, O that my Soul and this World were once again parted? O that the Lord would humble me, and lay me low, and bring my aſpiring Heart, to the very duſt! I would rather be with poor *Lazarus* at the Door, with poor *Job* on the dung-hill, any thing, nothing, any where, no where, rather then be this rich Worldling, or thus proud in a Palace; Oh how few of all that are fallen, are willing to riſe? how few of

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all that are wandred, are willing to return? O how light do they make, of all our calling upon them, and after all we can ſay to awaken them, do ſleep on; after all that we can do to reduce them, do hold on their way? doſt thou not ſee! doſt thou not feel, that for thy part, 'tis juſt thus with thee? thou that art proud, or covetous, or ſlothful, and whil'ſt thou canſt thus increaſe in the World, how ever thou decreaſeſt in thy Soul, art thou not at eaſe, art thou not content in this wretched caſe? Really Sirs, I much fear, that all that hath been ſaid, and if I had the Tongue of men and of Angels, and ſhould ſpeak all that could be ſpoken by a creature, 'twould very hardly change your mind and your wayes. I have ſeen ſo great diſappointments hitherto, that I fear how it may be ſtill, and under theſe fears, my Soul travail thou in pain, and groan being thus burthened.

Lord, have I not call'd upon them? Lord have I not called after them? hath not my very Soul been poured out to them and for them? and after all, have they heard? have they repented? are they recovered? and what they will do, O Lord, thou knoweſt; but thy Servant is in great doubt, what they will do; Ah Lord, Ah Lord, art not thou he, that canſt and muſt do the cure? when Lord? when ſhall it once be? O when ſhall it be ſaid again, *He hath made the blind to ſee, the Deaf to hear, the ſick to riſe and walk, and the dead to live.*

Soul, art thou ſtill content, he ſhould never do ſo by thee? wouldſt thou, that the Lord ſhould leave thee this blind Soul? this ſecure and ſenſeleſs and ſleepy Creature? wouldſt thou be let lye as thou art, or be let run on as thou art going, till thou haſt run thy ſelf out of all? wouldſt thou live and die in this caſe: Is there no hope, That yet at

length

length thou mayeſt be perſwaded, and prevailed upon? wilt thou yet ſay, no, *there is no hope*? I have loved ſtrangers and after ſtrangers I will go? I have lov'd mine eaſe, I have lov'd my money, I have lov'd my pleaſures, and I cannot leave them? What not for God? what not for a Soul? not for the ſmiles and ſweet embraces of thy God, nor for the peace and proſperity of thy Soul? If thou ſayeſt, God I hope may be mine however, my Soul may be ſafe however; as bad as you think 'tis with me, yet I hope 'tis not ſo bad, but that the Lord is ſtill my God, and hath ſuch hold of mine Heart, that it ſhall never utterly forſake him; Suppoſe it were ſo (which thou canſt not be ſure of) but ſuppoſe it be ſo, that the Lord is ſtill thy God, and thy Soul were not in ſuch danger of an everlaſting miſcarriage, yet is this diſhonour thou doſt to his Name, this diſtance thou liveſt from his face, this dimneſs that hath overgrown his image, thoſe defilements, wherewith thy Soul hath been polluted in the Houſe of thine Idols, that loſs that thou art at, in point of truth, tenderneſs, ſpirituality, vivacity, which either once thou hadſt, or at leaſt mighteſt have obtained, and that earthlyneſs, carnality, deadneſs that is upon thine Heart, is all this recompenced, and made up to thee? hath thine eaſe or pleaſures, or Worldly gain and greatneſs, ſo well paid thee for all this, that it hath either loſt thee or pull'd upon thee, that thou art ſtill of the ſame mind? Wilt thou yet ſay, I am content to be as I am? Ah, fooliſh *Galatians*, who hath bewitched you? Ah Friends, are you ſo fooliſh, that having begun in the Spirit, you will now think to mend your condition, by returning to the fleſh? what might I ſpeak to you, to ſet you into your right minds? would you be but convinced, that you are out of

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your minds, mad, and diſtracted Souls, there were the more hope you would come to your wits, and ſo with the prodigal, return to your Father, from whom you have been wandring.

Carnal Profeſſors, let not theſe words depart from your Hearts, till they have done their work; till they have ſhewed you your folly, and learned you the Wiſdom which is from above; till your own mouths be forced to acknowledge, I have play'd the Fool, I have wandred from my God, and turned to mine one way, and this my way is my folly; and now through the help of the Lord I will return. Wilt thou ſo? wilt thou return and recover? I will then add but this one word more, When thou art recovered, do thy beſt towards the recovery of thy brethren, pitty thy fallen Friends, and help them to ariſe; jogg thy ſleepy neighbours, and call upon them to awaken; who knowes, what a ſmall beginning may riſe to in the end? a few returned Perſons may fetch in more, and theſe more; a few Souls raiſed from the dead, may be the firſt Fruits of a more glorious reſurrection; the light and the life which is ſprung up in thine Heart, if it be well improved, may enlighten and enliven many (*your zeal hath provoked very many*, 2 Cor. 9. 2.) O be ſolicitous, firſt for thine own recovery, and then be zealous for the recovery of more; ſo ſhall there be, after all our darkneſs, an hopeful dawning towards a comfortable day; ſo may we hope, that our ſhining lights, which now ſtand ſo thin, *as a Beacon on an Hill*, *as a Cottage in a Vine-yard*, *as a Lodge in a Garden of Cucumbers*, may grow ſo numerous, that we may become a Land of Light, and our *Jeruſalem* may be made a praiſe in the Earth.

FINIS.

Books printed for and are to be ſold by *John Hancock*, at the Sign of the three Bibles in Popes Head Alley in *Cornhil.*

TWelve *Books lately publiſhed by Mr.* Tho. Brooks, *late Preacher of the Goſpel at* Margarets New Fiſh-ſtreet.

1. *Precious Remedies againſt Satans Devices, or Salve for Believers and Unbelievers Sores; being a Companion for thoſe that are in Chriſt or out of Chriſt.*

2. *Heaven on Earth: Or a ſerious Diſcourſe touching a Well-grounded aſſurance of Mans Everlaſting Happineſs.*

3. *The Unſearchable Riches of Chriſt held forth in* 22 *Sermons.*

4. *Apples of Gold for Young Men and Women, Or the Happineſs of being good betimes.*

5. *A String of Pearls: Or the beſt Things reſerved till laſt.*

6. *The Mute Chriſtian under the Smarting Rod, with Sovereign Antidotes againſt the moſt miſerable Exigents.*

7. *An Ark for all Gods* Noahs *in a Stormy Day.*

8. *The Crown and Glory of Chriſtianity, in* 48 *Sermons on* Heb. 12. 14.

9. *The privy Key of Heaven: Or a Diſcourſe of Cloſet Prayer.*

10. *An Heavenly Cordial for ſuch as have had or eſcaped the Plague.*

11. *A Cabinet of choice Jewels, or a Box of precious Oyntment: Containing ſpecial Maxims, Rules, and Directions in order to the clearing up of a Mans Intereſt in Chriſt, and his Title to all the Glory of another World.*

12. Londons *Lamentations.*

The Godly Mans Ark, in ſeveral Sermons. To which is added Mrs. Moors *Evidences for Heaven. By* Edmund Calamy, *B. D. at* Aldermanbury.

Chriſts Communion with his Church Militant. By Nicholas Lockyer.

Sin the Plague of Plagues. By Ralph Venning.

A true Narrative of thoſe two never to be forgotten Deliverances, one from the Spaniſh *Invaſion in* 88, *the other from the Helliſh Powder Plot,* Nov. 5. 1605. *By Mr.* Sam. Clark.

The Accurate Accountant, or London *Merchant: Being Inſtructions for keeping Merchants Accounts. By* Tho. Brown, *Accomptant.*

Short Writing; the moſt Eaſie, Exact, Lineal, and ſpeedy Method that hath ever yet been obtained, as thouſands in this City and elſewhere can from their own experience teſtifie. By Theophilus Metcalfe.

Alſo a Book called a Schoolmaſter to it, explaining all the Rules thereof.

A Word of Advice to Saints, or a choice Drop of Honey from the Rock Chriſt.

A Copy Book of the Neweſt and moſt Uſeful Hands, with Directions for Spelling and Cypher-ing.

Bridges

Bridges *Remains: Being eight choice Sermons. By the late Reverend Mr.* William Bridge *of* Yarmouth.

A Diſſwaſive from Conformity to the World. Alſo Gods Severity againſt Impenitent Sinners. By Henry Stubbes, *Miniſter of the Goſpel.*

Vennings *Remains, being the ſubſtance of many Sermons. By Mr.* Ralph Venning; *prepared by himſelf for the Preſs a little before his Death.*

The Poor Mans Family book. By Richard Baxter.

Luthers 34 *ſpecial and choice Sermons.*

Comæ Berenicis, *or the Hairy Comet; being a Prognoſtick of Malignant Influences from the many Blazing Stars wandring in our Horizon.*

Goſpel Love, Heart Purity, and the Flouriſhing of the Righteous: Being the laſt Sermons of that late Eminent Divine Mr. Joſeph Caryl.

The Young Mans Guide to Bleſſedneſs, or Seaſonable Directions for Youth in their unconverted Eſtate. By R. Matthew, *Miniſter of the Goſpel.*

Cauſa Dei, *or an Apology for God; wherein the Perpetuity of Infernal Torments is evinced, and his both Goodneſs and Juſtice defended. Alſo the nature of Puniſhments in General, and of Infernal ones in particular, diſplayed by* R. Burthogge.

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Strength in Weakneſs; Being a Sermon preacked at the Funeral of Mrs. Martha Brooks, *late Wife to Mr.* Thomas Brooks, *Miniſter of the Goſpel. To*

which is added some Experiences of the Grace and Dealings of God, observed and gathered by a near Relation of the said Mrs. Brooks.

An Excellent Catechism, by the late Reverend Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs.

A Discourse of Christs Coming, and the Influence which the Expectation thereof hath on all manner of Holy Conversation and Godlinss: By Theophilus Gale.

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2. *Divine Predestination.*
3. *The True Church Regiment.*
4. *Predictions of Messias.*
5. *Christs two Genealogies.*
6. *The Revelation Revealed.*
7. *Christs Millenary Reign.*
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A Cry for Labourers in Gods Harvest: Being a Sermon preached at the Funeral of Mr. Ralph Venning: *By* R. Bragge, *Minister of the Gospel.*

Christian Directions, shewing how to walk with God all the day long: By Tho. Gouge.

The Young Mans Guide through the Wilderness of this World to the Heavenly Canaan: *By* Tho. Gouge.

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Conſcience the beſt Friend upon Earth, or the Happy Effects of keeping a Good Conſcience: By Henry Stubbes.

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Orthodox Paradoxes Theoretical and Experimental, or a Believer clearing Truth by ſeeming Contradictions: With an Appendix of the Triumph of Aſſurance over the Law, Sin, World, Wants, &c. *To which is added, The New Command Renewed, or Love one another: With Ten Rules for the right underſtanding of Scripture: By* R. Venning, *A. M.*

An Awakening Call from the Eternal God to the Unconverted, with ſeaſonable Advice to them that are under Convictions, to prevent their miſcarrying in Converſion: By Samuel Corbyn, *A. M.*

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